

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, June 20, 2005
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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Meetings With Foreign Leaders
African Growth and Opportunity Act—983
“An American Celebration at Ford’s
Theatre”—983
Congressional picnic—1004, 1005
Energy Efficiency Forum, 16th annual—999
Medicare Modernization Act, implementing—
1006
Minnesota, discussion on implementing the
Medicare Modernization Act in Maple
Grove—1012
National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast—1005
Partnerships for Learning, Youth Exchange
and Study, students—985
Pennsylvania, strengthening Social Security in
University Park—988
President’s Dinner—995
Radio address—982

Appointments and Nominations

Senate Confirmation of Thomas B. Griffith as
a U.S. Appeals Court Judge for the District
of Columbia Circuit, statement—995

Communications to Congress

Budget amendments, letter transmitting—988
Emergency Response Fund, letter on
reallocation—983

Communications to Federal Agencies

Determination To Authorize a Drawdown for
Afghanistan, memorandum—1004
Suspension of Limitations Under the
Jerusalem Embassy Act, memorandum—
1004

Executive Orders

Amendment to Executive Order 13369,
Relating to the President’s Advisory Panel
on Federal Tax Reform—1012
Implementing Amendments to Agreement on
Border Environment Cooperation
Commission and North American
Development Bank—1020

Letters and Messages

Juneteenth, message—1003

(Continued on the inside of the back cover.)

Editor’s Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on June 17, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Contents—Continued

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Botswana, President Mogae—983
Ghana, President Kufuor—983
Mozambique, President Guebuza—983
Namibia, President Pohamba—983
Niger, President Tandja—983

Proclamations

Father's Day—1011
Flag Day and National Flag Week—981

Statements by the President

See also Appointments and Nominations
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, birthday—1021
Iran, Presidential elections—1010

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—1023
Checklist of White House press releases—
1023
Digest of other White House
announcements—1021
Nominations submitted to the Senate—1022

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Week Ending Friday, June 17, 2005

**Proclamation 7910—Flag Day and
National Flag Week, 2005**

June 10, 2005

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

For more than two centuries, the flag of the United States has been a symbol of hope and pride. The flag has inspired our citizens during times of conflict and comforted us during moments of sorrow and loss. On Flag Day and throughout National Flag Week, we celebrate the proud legacy of Old Glory and reflect on this enduring symbol of freedom.

On June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution stating that “the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field.” As States have been added to the Union, the flag has been modified to reflect their addition to our Nation. Today, the appearance of our flag is based on President Eisenhower’s Executive Order of August 21, 1959, to include a star for all 50 States together with 13 stripes representing the original 13 American colonies.

Generations of Americans in uniform have carried the Stars and Stripes into battle so that our citizens can live in freedom. Across the globe, a new generation of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen has stepped forward to serve under our flag, defending America from our enemies. We are grateful to them and their families for defending our flag and the values of our great Nation.

On this Flag Day, we recall the rich history of Old Glory, and we remember our duty to carry our heritage of freedom into the future.

To commemorate the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 3, 1949, as amended (63 Stat. 492),

designated June 14 of each year as “Flag Day” and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its observance and for the display of the flag of the United States on all Federal Government buildings. The Congress also requested, by joint resolution approved June 9, 1966, as amended (80 Stat. 194), that the President issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as “National Flag Week” and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2005, as Flag Day and the week beginning June 12, 2005, as National Flag Week. I direct the appropriate officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings during that week, and I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places. I also call upon the people of the United States to observe with pride and all due ceremony those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress (89 Stat. 211), as a time to honor America, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to publicly recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:04 a.m., June 14, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 15. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address*June 11, 2005*

Good morning. As we enter the summer season, my administration is working hard to keep our economy growing and creating jobs. Next week, I will talk about some of my plans to help American families achieve long-term economic security.

On Tuesday, I will discuss Social Security reform with young people in Pennsylvania. I will remind them that the Social Security system is in good shape for their grandparents and for anybody born prior to 1950. I will also tell them that we must act now to strengthen and modernize Social Security so these young people can have a secure retirement. Our young people understand that if we fail to act, Social Security will not be sound when they need it. They know that the millions of baby boomers about to retire will live longer and collect benefits that the system cannot afford.

As we make Social Security permanently sustainable, we must also make it a better deal for younger workers, by allowing them to set aside a portion of their payroll taxes in voluntary personal savings accounts. These accounts would provide the opportunity to earn a higher rate of return than the current system can offer. Personal accounts would contribute to the economic security of Americans by allowing them to build up a real nest egg, something they own and can pass on to their spouse or children, and that Government cannot take away.

On Wednesday, I will address the Energy Efficiency Forum here in Washington and renew my call for Congress to act on the energy plan I proposed 4 years ago. Today's high energy prices are like a tax that drags on our economy. We must ensure that American families and small businesses have access to a reliable supply of affordable energy. My energy strategy will lessen our dependence on foreign oil by encouraging conservation, promoting domestic production in environmentally friendly ways, and funding promising new sources of energy such as hydrogen, ethanol, and biodiesel. It will also modernize our aging electricity grid.

The House has passed a good energy bill. Now, the American people expect the Senate to act. For the sake of our economic and national security, Congress needs to get a good energy bill to my desk by August.

On Thursday and Friday, I will discuss a key element of ensuring health care security for our Nation's seniors. The Medicare modernization bill I signed into law in 2003 created a new prescription drug benefit, so our seniors could have more choices and receive the affordable modern health care they deserve. This voluntary benefit begins next January, and seniors will be eligible to enroll starting this November. The plan will provide many options for dependable prescription drug coverage through Medicare. During the coming months, we will work to educate all of our seniors about this new benefit, so they can choose confidently the drug plan that best meets their needs.

Finally, to ensure economic security for all Americans, Congress needs to keep your taxes low and be wise with taxpayers' dollars. I proposed and the House and Senate passed a responsible budget resolution that meets our priorities and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. The weeks ahead will bring important decisions on Government spending including the highway bill. Congress needs to soon send me a fiscally responsible highway bill that modernizes our roads and bridges and improves safety and creates jobs.

Achieving economic security for all Americans requires us to confront challenges now, not pass them on to future generations. In the coming weeks, I will work with Congress on all these priorities so we can strengthen our Nation's prosperity for generations to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on June 10 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Reallocation of Emergency Response Fund

June 10, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am notifying the Congress of my intent to reallocate funds previously transferred from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF).

At this time, \$1.074 million of ERF funds will be reallocated within the Department of the Treasury to strengthen the physical protection of the main Treasury building.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13.

Remarks at “An American Celebration at Ford’s Theatre”

June 12, 2005

The President. Jeff, thanks for the warm introduction. I like a good, long introduction. [Laughter] Say, listen, if you’re ever looking for work, Laura is looking for some new material. [Laughter]

We’ve had a wonderful time this evening. Thank you all very much. I particularly want to thank the entertainers tonight: Debbie Allen and Geena Davis, Hilary Duff, Josh Gracin, Denyce Graves, Jesse McCartney. Thanks for dedicating a song to Laura, Jesse.

The First Lady. Thank you very much, Jesse.

The President. Pendragons—how about the Pendragons—and Julie Roberts. Thank you all so very much for being here.

I also want to thank our gala chair, Catherine Reynolds, as well as the general co-chairs who are here, Karyn Frist, Landra Reid, Abby Blunt, and Debbie Dingell. Laura and I thank the Ford’s Theatre Society and to the producing director, Paul Tetreault.

Since we moved to Washington, Laura and I have been guests of Ford’s Theatre a number of times, and we appreciate the vital work

it is doing. As a working stage, Ford’s Theatre provides an important venue for the arts right here in the heart of our Nation’s Capital.

I’m really grateful to the members of the Armed Services who participated in tonight’s celebration. Our military is defending America and advancing the cause of freedom and peace around the world. We are privileged to be citizens of a country served by our brave troops, and we thank them for their service.

We appreciate the military families who are with us tonight. It’s not easy being left behind when a loved one goes to war. By loving and supporting a man or woman in uniform, our military families also serve our Nation, and America is grateful to all of them for their support and sacrifice.

Once again, we thank all the entertainers and the supporters of the Ford’s Theatre who have made this evening one to remember. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President’s remarks were videotaped at approximately 8:45 p.m. at Ford’s Theatre for broadcast on July 4 on the ABC Television Network. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Jeff Foxworthy, the Pendragons, and Julie Roberts. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13.

Remarks on the African Growth and Opportunity Act

June 13, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the White House. I want to thank the five Presidents who are with us today: President Mogae of Botswana, President Kufuor of Ghana, President Guebuza of Mozambique, President Pohamba of Namibia, and President Tandja of Niger.

We just had a great discussion. I consider these men friends. I consider them to be strong patriots of their respective countries, and I consider them to be democrats.

I want to thank Secretary of State Condi Rice for joining us today, and she was in the discussions we had earlier. I’m honored that the members of the diplomatic corps have joined us. I thank the Ambassadors for being here.

I appreciate Members of the Congress being here: Senator Bill Frist, the majority leader is with us; Congressman Bill Thomas, Congressman Charlie Rangel of the Ways and Means Committee, two fine Members, and I appreciate you being here as a symbol of unity and support for—[laughter]—for moving the trade agenda forward. I appreciate Congressman Jim Kolbe from Arizona for being here as well. Thank you all for coming, really are honored you're here, and I know the Presidents are as well.

All the Presidents gathered here represent countries that have held democratic elections in the last year. What a strong statement that these leaders have made about democracy and the importance of democracy on the continent of Africa. All of us share a fundamental commitment to advancing democracy and opportunity on the continent of Africa, and all of us believe that one of the most effective ways to advance democracy and deliver hope to the people of Africa is through mutually beneficial trade.

That was certainly the idea behind the African Growth and Opportunity Act, a bipartisan act, an act of the United States Congress that recognized this fact. You see, AGOA is promoting democratic reform in Africa by providing incentives for these nations to extend freedom and opportunity to all of their citizens. Under this law, African nations can obtain greater access to our markets by showing their commitment to economic and political reform, by respecting human rights, tearing down trade barriers, and strengthening property rights and the rule of law, which is precisely what the leaders of these five nations are doing.

Because AGOA is producing results, I've twice signed into law provisions that build on its success and extend its benefits long into the future. My predecessor worked with the Congress to get the law passed. I have been honored to work with the Congress to extend the good law. And the reason why I feel confident in going to the Congress is because it has worked. It's a good piece of legislation that has made a difference in people's lives.

In 2004, we saw dramatic evidence of the results that this new engagement between the United States and Africa is helping

produce. Last year, exports to the United States from AGOA nations were up 88 percent over the year before, and non-oil exports were up by 22 percent. In other words, we pledged to open our markets; we have opened our markets; and people are now making goods that the United States consumers want to buy. And that's helpful. That's how you spread wealth. That's how you encourage hope and opportunity.

Over the same period, interestingly enough, U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa were up 25 percent. In other words, this is a two-way street. Not only have folks in Africa benefited by selling products in the United States; American businesses, small and large, have benefited through the opening of the African market as well. Across sub-Saharan Africa, economic growth increased to an 8-year high. Real per capita income increased by 2.7 percent, and this growth is expected to continue in 2005. By creating jobs and lowering prices and expanding opportunity, AGOA is today developing benefits for Americans and Africans alike, and that's important for our fellow citizens to understand. Trade is beneficial for the working people here in America, just like it's beneficial for people on the continent of Africa.

We'll continue to work for policies that build on these impressive results. In December, I announced that 37 African countries are now eligible for AGOA benefits, and next month in Senegal, senior ministers from my administration will meet with government ministers from these 37 AGOA nations to build on this progress. These representatives will be joined by hundreds of American and African businesses and private organizations who will discuss ways to promote development and strengthen civil society.

As we expand our trade, the United States is committing to expanding our efforts to relieve hunger, reduce debt, fight disease on the African continent. One thing we discussed was the Millennium Challenge Account, and I assured the leaders we will work harder and faster to certify countries for the MCA, so that MCA countries and the people in the MCA countries can see the benefit of this really important piece of legislation and funding.

I also announced last week that the United States will provide about \$674 million of additional resources to help alleviate humanitarian emergencies in African nations, especially the growing famine in parts of Africa. On Saturday, we also announced an agreement worked out through the Group of Eight industrialized nations that will cancel \$40 billion in debt owed by 18 of the world's poorest nations, including 14 in Africa. The countries eligible for this relief are those that have put themselves on the path to reform. We believe that by removing a crippling debt burden, we'll help millions of Africans improve their lives and grow their economies.

Finally, one of the greatest causes of suffering in Africa is the spread of HIV/AIDS. I appreciate Randy Tobias being here. I made fighting this terrible disease a top priority of my administration by launching an emergency plan for AIDS relief. Working with our African partners, we have now delivered lifesaving treatment to more than 200,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa, and we're on our way to meeting an important goal—an important 5-year goal—of providing treatment for nearly 2 million African adults and children.

The United States of America is firmly committed to working with governments to help fight the pandemic of AIDS. It is—this crisis is one that can be arrested. And I want you all to know that when America makes a commitment, we mean what we say, and this Government means what it says, and this Congress means what it says, and we'll work together to fight HIV/AIDS.

These are just some of the initiatives that we're pursuing to help Africa's leaders bring democracy and prosperity and hope to their people. The reason I ask these Presidents to join us today is because I applaud their courage; I appreciate their wisdom. I appreciate them being such good friends that they're able to feel comfortable in coming to the White House to say, "Mr. President, this is going well, and this isn't. How about working together to make this work better?" That's how we solve problems. We solve problems by having a frank and open dialog.

We believe Africa is a continent full of promise and talent and opportunity, and the United States will do our part to help the

people of Africa realize the brighter future they deserve.

Again, I'm honored you all are here. Thank you all for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in Room 450 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to President Festus Mogae of Botswana; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique; President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia; and President Mamadou Tandja of Niger.

Remarks to Students From the Partnerships for Learning, Youth Exchange and Study

June 13, 2005

Nice and warm today, isn't it? I'm glad you're here. Almost a year living and studying in America—I hope you've come to realize this isn't my house; this is the people's house. And Laura and I are just temporary residents here. That's how democracy works.

I really think you're part of an important program that is bringing students from Muslim countries to the United States. I think it's important, and I hope you think it's important too. I'm amazed by the number of countries represented amongst you all: Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, West Bank, Gaza, Arab communities in Israel. You represent a lot of countries and a lot of people. Here's what I think. I think your generation is going to help shape one of the most exciting periods of history in the broader Middle East and the world. It's a period of time when the hope of liberty is spreading to millions.

And I've heard your stories, and people who know your program have talked to me about your experiences and your attitudes. So let me make a prediction, that I should be able to say to the world, I have confidence in the spread of freedom because there's a young group of people who love freedom and want to do something about seeing freedom spread. That's what I think.

I'm really pleased that Dina Powell is here. Dina is the—Egyptian American, by the

way—she ran the Presidential personnel department. In other words, she's the person that brought names to me that would serve in our Government. It's a pretty powerful position, when you think about it. I nominated her to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. That's a big job here in America. I'm going to miss her in the White House, but our country will be well-served by her serving in the State Department.

I appreciate the staff of the Department of State Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs. I want to thank the representatives from AYUSA for being here. And I appreciate the representatives from the Close Up Foundation for coming. I want to thank your chaperones for being here as well, caring adults, people who want you to enjoy your experience here in America.

The American people probably don't know this program well, so I'm going to say some things that's obvious to you. First, you've been here for 10 months, and secondly, you've attended American high schools, and you've stayed with American families, and you made American friends, which means that you have made contributions. You've contributed to better understanding.

You've also done some interesting things. I've been told you volunteered in local charities. You found out one of the great strengths of this country is the fact that people volunteer to make somebody else's life better. We all got hearts and care deeply about a neighbor in need, and there's a universal call in the Good Books throughout the world that says, "Love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself." And I understand some of you did that, and I want to thank you for contributing to our country.

I want to thank you for teaching—being teachers, just by telling people your life story. It really wasn't all that hard to be a good teacher, was it—say, "Here's how I was raised," and "Here's what I believe," and "Here's what my culture is like," and "Here's what my faith teaches me." So, thanks for being a teacher as well as a helper.

I know there's a student here who went to Grayling High School in Michigan, Abdulrahma. He's from Syria. He took on a special project. He decided—and I'm sure

maybe some of you all did the same thing during the holy month of Ramadan—explained to students what that means. A lot of kids your age here in this country really aren't sure what Ramadan means, and it's important for them to understand what Ramadan means. And so Abdul—here's what he said. He said, "When I got to one of my classes on the first day of Ramadan, I was totally amazed. There were signs everywhere in the class saying 'Happy Ramadan, Abdul.' Some students even tried to fast with me on the first day."

Getting a high school kid in America to fast is kind of hard to do. [Laughter] But the point there of the story is, somebody—some kids in that high school class have a better understanding of a different culture.

Many of you have shown young Americans how Islam inspires you to live, to lead lives based on honesty and justice and compassion. Because you came to this country, thousands of Americans better understand your faith and your heritage, and that's really important. So I want to thank you. I want to thank you for reaching out. I want to thank you for taking a little bit of a risk. It's not easy to come to a foreign country, is it, to leave home. It must be kind of hard—you say, "Well, I can't imagine what it's going to be like to go to school in America and be teamed up with a family I've never met before." And so you were risktakers for the sake of understanding and world peace, and I want to thank you for that.

I suspect during your stay here, you came across Americans who hail from your home countries. If you didn't, it's only because you didn't get enough exposure, because I can assure you, for every country represented here, there are hundreds of Americans—at least hundreds of Americans from your native land, men and women who came to America because they know this is a land where hard work will be rewarded, where faith will be respected, and where cultural heritage will be valued.

Maria—a young girl named Maria from Pakistan—I don't think she's here with us today—put it well in an essay she wrote about her experience. There's some Americans who may be watching this on TV now, and I want them to hear what Maria wrote. She says,

"The very important thing I learned about America is that it's a melting pot where you can find the world in one place living together. I really appreciate this," she said. "Now if someone says anything negative about America, I would stand up, because I love America." That's one of the lessons she learned about her trip here.

I don't know if you—I guess you all were here during the Presidential election. It must have been an interesting experience for you. It was certainly an interesting one for me. [Laughter] You got to see candidates travel the country asking for the vote, working day in and day out, in my case, saying to the people, "I got something to do," in my opponent's case—my opponents' cases, saying, "I think I can do a better job than old George W." But that's what democracy is about. It's about understanding the boss; in our form of government, the people decide. And that's a form of government that's healthy and good.

I know some of you got involved in the campaign. Cowtar from Morocco volunteered on election day, helping make sure Oregon voters had rides to the polls. And I want to thank you for participating. I was told that a fellow named Butan from Iraq, who's with us, actually volunteered at a local political headquarters in the State of Pennsylvania. I hope you found that an exciting experience. It's called grassroots politics. It probably doesn't translate very well in some of your native tongues, but it means getting involved at the local level to convince people to participate in the democratic process.

We're seeing the democracy campaigns like the one I went through taking place now in other parts of the world. I mean, Afghanistan had a vote. It was a fantastic experience for a lot of people—folks. And I know some of you lived under the clutches of the Taliban. It must have been an incredibly refreshing experience to be able to go and express yourself at the polls, say, "This is what I think. This is my opinion, not the opinion of tyrants, but this is my opinion." And it's the collective opinion of thousands which decided the fate of that country.

People in Iraq voted. People in that country defied the car bombers, the suiciders, the killers, those who fear freedom, and said,

"I'm going to go to the polls, no matter what the risk is." Democracy is on the march. Freedom is on the march. And I'm convinced we're just seeing the beginnings of it, and the world is going to be more peaceful because of it.

I know you're looking forward to going home. But when you get home, I hope you remind people about what you found here, that the people of this country care deeply about others, that we respect religion, that we believe in human rights and human dignity, that we believe every person has worth, and that we do want to have a world that's more peaceful and more free.

I hope you go home and say that Americans are proud of watching the progress that is being made, of people assuming liberty. One of the lessons I hope you share with the people back home, your buddies and your families, is that we understand that it's hard to go from tyranny to freedom. We had a little trouble on our own. If you've studied American history, you'll realize that our path to democracy wasn't all that smooth. In other words, we had setbacks and hard work to try to achieve as good a government as we can possibly have. It's hard work. It's really hard work.

I hope when you go home, you explain to people that we understand that the form of democracy your country takes will reflect your values and your history, not American values and American history. In other words, we love the concept of people being free. We believe democracy is the best form of government, but we fully understand that it's got to be a democracy that suits the needs of the people in the countries from which you're from.

I believe freedom is universal. I don't believe freedom is America's gift to the world. I believe there's an Almighty God who speaks to different faiths, and I believe freedom is a gift from that Almighty. And that's why I'm so confident and optimistic that freedom will prevail.

I hope you realize the impact you've made on some people. A lot of people—you know, there's such a thing called "word-of-mouth." People get talking, "I met so-and-so. I met old Abdul. He seemed like a good fellow to me." And the word gets out about the values

that you brought to America. There's a lot of people here in this country, now when they start thinking about the Middle East, they're going to think about it differently because of the impact you've had on them, because you were willing to share your culture and your way of life.

I hope you look at yourself as bridge builders. And as importantly, I hope you look at this experience as the beginning of a journey that will—in which you'll become leaders. You know, old guys like me will be moving on, but someday—I plan to live for quite a while—someday I hope to turn on my TV and see you standing up leading your country or talking about human rights and minority rights and human dignity in the countries where you're from. I hope you understand that you have a fantastic opportunity to make a difference. You've already made a difference here in America. And with this experience, go home and continue making differences.

By the way, if you feel like going to college, come back. We've got some great universities here. We want people from all around the world coming to our universities. Tell your buddies, your friends and neighbors, to think about coming to America to go to university. The more exchanges there are of people of like age, the better off the world will be.

Anyway, welcome to the Rose Garden. I hope you loved our country. I hope you enjoyed your experience. I hope you come back. In the meantime, I ask for God's blessings on you all and your families and the peoples of your country. Thank you for being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

June 13, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2006 budget amendments for the Department of Justice and the General Services Administration. In addition, this transmittal contains FY 2006 budget amendments

for the Legislative and Judicial Branches. As a matter of comity, appropriations requests of the Legislative and Judicial Branches are commonly transmitted without change.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 14.

Remarks on Strengthening Social Security in University Park, Pennsylvania

June 14, 2005

The President. Mr. President, thanks for the great introduction, and thanks for having me. It's an honor to be here at Penn State University, one of the great universities in our country. I want to thank the president of this fine university, President Spanier, for having us. Thank you for letting me come here on this beautiful campus.

Guess what happened? There was a pretty famous person at the airport today. [*Laughter*] And so I said, "Why don't you ride over to the college campus with me here, the university campus. I need a briefing on what's going on." And Joe Paterno kindly agreed to travel with me. I said, "Let's talk football." He said, "Why don't you tell me what's going on in Washington." [*Laughter*] I tell you one thing about Joe Paterno; there's no more decent fellow on the face of the Earth—what a man who sets high standards. He loves his family. He loves this university. He loves his country, and my mother and dad love him. Coach, thanks for coming, proud you're here.

I appreciate the FFA a lot. I appreciate the fact that the Pennsylvania FFA has made a table for the Crawford, Texas, FFA. I'm looking forward to telling the folks there at Crawford how decent the good folks here are in Pennsylvania. I really want to thank you for that gesture. I bet they like that table. I'm a little disappointed you didn't make the table for me. [*Laughter*]

But thanks for what you—thanks for the example you have set. Thanks for understanding the importance of values. I mean, one thing that's really important about our farming communities all across the country is that in our farming communities you find the values of hard work, faith, love of family, and love of our country. And I want to thank you all for carrying on that tradition of carrying those values.

I'm sorry my wife isn't here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know, most people are sorry—[laughter]—she's not here instead of me. But she is doing great. I'm a lucky man when Laura said, "I do." She is a fabulous First Lady, a great mom, and a great wife. And she sends her very best.

I want to thank the Governor of the great State of Pennsylvania for joining us today, Governor Rendell. I'm proud you're here, and thank you for serving.

I am traveling with members of the mighty Pennsylvania congressional delegation. First, Senator Arlen Specter—I appreciate you being here, Mr. Chairman. Senator Specter is battling cancer with incredible courage, and I appreciate your allegiance. I'm proud to be with Senator Rick Santorum, a graduate of Penn State University. Congressman John Peterson from this area. John, thank you for joining us.

Dennis Wolff, the secretary of agriculture from Pennsylvania, I appreciate you being here, Dennis. I want to thank Chris Herr, the president of the Pennsylvania FAA Foundation. I want to thank Mike Brammer, the executive manager. Most of all, I want to thank you all for letting me come by.

You know, when I landed, I met another person, named Mickey Peters. The reason I bring up Mickey is she is a volunteer with the Centre County Cooperative Extension 4-H program. She has been a volunteer for more than 40 years and helping instill values and reminding all of us that we have a commitment to serve our respective communities. The reason I bring up Mickey is because, if you're interested in serving your country, your State, or your community, volunteer. See, the great strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. If you want to truly be a patriot in America,

feed the hungry; find shelter for the homeless; love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. Mickey, thank you for coming, and thank you for the example you have set.

I am particularly grateful to come to speak to younger Americans and a few older ones here I see scattered around. [Laughter] We're living in historic times. These are amazing times. And I hope you're as excited about them as I am. I wish I could tell you this wasn't the truth—the case, but the case is, we're still fighting the war against terrorists. It's a different kind of war. But it's a necessary war, because our most solemn duty is to protect the homeland.

Our strategy is clear: We will stay on the offensive against the enemy. We will find them where they hide. We will bring them to justice. We will defeat them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here at home. And for those of you with a relative in the United States military, I want you to do me a favor and thank them on behalf of the Commander in Chief, but more importantly, thank them on behalf of a grateful nation for their sacrifice and service.

The second part of our strategy to defeat terror, to spread the peace, is to spread liberty, is to help those courageous souls who demand the God-given right to live in a free society. Freedom is on the march around the world now. We're living in amazing times when millions of people in Afghanistan, when given a chance, went to the polls to say, "We want to live in a free society." Freedom is on the march in places like Lebanon and Ukraine. Freedom has taken hold in Georgia. Freedom has taken hold in Lebanon. Freedom has taken hold in Iraq, where 8.5 million citizens defied suiciders and killers to say with a loud voice to the world, "We want to be free." And a free society is a necessary part of spreading the peace.

So as you watch the dramatic changes taking place in the world, keep in mind we're laying the foundation for a peaceful world, a world in which boys and girls from all cultures and all countries can realize their dreams, can live in a free society. There's no doubt in my mind this world will be better off as freedom spreads. And I'm proud that the United States of America is taking the

lead in spreading democracy and freedom around the world.

There are dramatic times here at home. As you know, there are dramatic changes in agriculture taking place. Now, farming is still the first industry in America. It is a luxury that we live in a country that can feed ourselves, and we need to keep it that way. The American agriculture is diverse, and it's a complex industry, where family farmers are CEOs, where the occupations in agriculture run from engineering and food science to business management and to biotechnology. Which says to me, you better take advantage of the educations you got. Which says, you got to learn, you got to set high standards and work hard, read more than you watch TV, take your teachers seriously because you're going to need a good education in order to be able to compete in this world.

We started our—we made good progress for the agriculture community by this farm bill I was honored to sign 3 years ago. This is a farm bill that provided a strong safety net for our farmers. It allows farmers and ranchers to plan and to operate based upon market realities, not Government dictates. You see, we tried to reduce Government interference in the agricultural market and, at the same time, create incentives for sound conservation practices. The bill I signed and the Congress passed has helped strengthen the farm economy and promoted independence by our farmers and helped preserve the farming way of life. And now we've got to build on the successes.

I've got a good man as the Secretary of Agriculture in Mike Johanns. He actually grew up on a farm. Some of you will be pleased to hear he grew up on a dairy farm. He's going to be speaking to an FFA group in Illinois. He's going to be listening to farmers and ranchers all across our country as we prepare for a new farm bill. But one thing is for certain—he doesn't need to travel the country for me to understand this: In order for the agricultural sector of America to be strong, we got to keep your taxes low.

The tax relief we passed has helped our economy overcome a lot of challenges. The small-business sector is strong today because small businesses are paying fewer Federal taxes. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong

today because of the tax relief. More people are working today in America than ever before in our Nation's history. The national unemployment rate is 5.1 percent. We're making good progress. But in order to make sure this progress continues, Congress needs to make the tax relief we passed permanent.

And speaking about tax relief, in order to make sure our farms stay within our farming families, we need to get rid of the death tax once and for all. It makes no sense to tax a person's assets twice, once while they're living and again after they die. For the sake of family farmers, Congress needs to get rid of the death tax forever.

To keep agriculture strong, to make sure these good folks have a chance to make a good living in the agricultural sector, we need to continue to open up new markets abroad. I always told the American people, "If you're good at something, let's promote it." We're really good at growing things, so why don't we grow things and sell them abroad? I mean, we've got enough food to feed ourselves, so it seems like to me to be a good strategy to open up markets so others can buy our crops, our soybeans and our corn, our products we grow right here at home.

My administration supports trade initiatives that level the playing field, and one such initiative is the Central American Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, which is coming before the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. Let me tell you why I think this is a good deal for all Americans as well as our farmers and ranchers. Right now the United States is open to more than 80 percent of the goods being sold out of Central America into our own markets, and yet 80 percent of our goods don't have equal access to their markets, markets of about 44 million people. Catch this: The United States is already open to more than 99 percent of Central America's agricultural products. In other words, we've opened up our market, but our farm exports to Central America are losing ground every day to third countries that have got trade deals with these nations.

As your President, it seems like to make sense to me to say, "If we treat you this way, you treat us"—that's what fair trade is all

about. By opening up Central American markets, it will help our farmers. The American Farm Bureau Federation estimates that CAFTA could boost our agricultural exports by \$1.5 billion when fully implemented. For the sake of fairness and for the sake of the agricultural economy, the United States Congress needs to pass the CAFTA trade agreement now.

To keep American agriculture strong, we need to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable, reliable, and secure supplies of energy. You know, when I first came to Washington, DC, nearly 4 years ago—a little over 4 years ago—I knew we had a problem with energy. See, we're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. So we developed a strategy that would make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And by the way, one reason why you're seeing your gasoline prices go up, why farmers are paying higher fertilizer prices, why it costs more to fill your tractor, is because we're dependent on foreign sources of energy.

And so I said to the United States Congress, "Why don't we get wise about our energy policy." Why don't we do things differently. Why don't we encourage conservation. Why don't we make sure we spend money so we can have clean coal technology, so we can use the coal resources of a State like Pennsylvania in our electricity plants that has zero emissions. Why don't we continue research and development, so we can use soybeans or corn to develop new sources of energy.

I was at a plant the other day in Virginia. It was a soy diesel refinery. They're taking crops grown right here in America, putting them in the refinery, and out comes a fuel that we can use in diesel engines.

We need to be using clean, safe nuclear power. We need to make sure that the United States of America diversifies away from a hydrocarbon society so we're no longer dependent on foreign sources of energy. The House has passed a bill. The Senate will have the bill on the floor. This Congress needs to stop debating energy policy and get a bill to my desk before the August recess break.

Now, I want to talk about one other subject that the young here need to pay attention

to, and that's the Social Security issue. First, you know, some people have said to me in Washington, "Why did you bring it up? Why did you talk about such a politically difficult subject?" Well, here's why. I think there's a problem. I'm about to explain why there is a problem. But I also know what the nature of the job of the Presidency is. The job of the President is to confront problems and not pass those problems on to future Presidents and future Congresses. The easy path is to do nothing. That's the easy political path. The tough path is to come together and get something done. But let me tell you something: By doing nothing, you're about to hear that we will have done a disservice to a younger group of Americans coming up.

Franklin Roosevelt did a wise thing when he created the Social Security system. Social Security has been an important safety net for a lot of seniors. And for seniors receiving a check today, I want to assure you you're going to continue to get your check. The system is solvent for our seniors. You have nothing to worry about. I know all the political ads and the propaganda. I'm sure, Governor, you've had to put up with that occasionally. But the truth is—the truth is, if you're born prior to 1950, you're going to get your check. I don't care what the politicians say.

Here's the problem. The problem exists for a young generation of Americans. And the reason why is there are a bunch of people getting ready to retire. We're called baby boomers. I'm one. I was born in 1946. I reach retirement age in 2008. It's a convenient year for me to reach retirement age. *[Laughter]* The problem is there's a lot of people like me getting ready to retire. Do you realize today there are about 40 million retirees receiving benefits? By the time the baby boomers retire, there's going to be about 72 million of us receiving benefits. We got a whole lot of people getting ready to retire.

And we're living longer. My generation will live longer than the previous generation. Coach Paterno said, "Are you exercising a lot, Mr. President?" I said, "All the time, Coach. I'm trying to live longer than the previous generation."

And not only that, but when people were running for Congress in previous years, they'd say, "Vote for me. I'll make sure your

benefits go up faster than the rate of inflation.” And that’s what happened. That’s one of those political promises that was kept. So you’ve got a lot of baby boomers like me, a whole lot of us, going to be living longer, getting greater benefits than the previous generation, which is all fine and good until you realize the other half of the equation.

Now, in 1950, early fifties, there was about 16 workers for every beneficiary, which meant the load wasn’t all that heavy when you’re paying your payroll tax to take care of a beneficiary. Today, there’s 3.3 workers per beneficiary. When a lot of these kids get older, there’s going to be 2 workers per beneficiary. You’ve got fewer workers, fewer people taking care of people like me who will be living longer and receiving greater benefits. And that’s the problem.

In 2017, there will be more money going out than coming in. And every year thereafter, it gets worse. In 2027, there will be about a \$200-billion-a-year shortfall. And it gets worse until finally, 2041, the system would be bankrupt.

So we’re looking at a bankrupt system for younger workers. We’re asking younger workers to pay payroll tax, to pay hard-earned money into a system that’s going broke. That doesn’t seem right to me. That doesn’t seem fair, to know the facts and not do something about it. And so that’s why I went in front of the United States Congress and I said, “We’ve got a problem. The problem—the facts are irrefutable, and now we need to do something about it.” I said, “Why don’t we get rid of all the partisan bickering in Washington, DC, and come together for the good of a generation of people coming up.”

I believe I have more—a responsibility more than just bringing the problem out there. And so I have talked about solutions, and I’d like to share some of my thoughts with you. First, a reformed system—now, remember, if you’re getting your check, I’m not talking to you. Nothing changes for people receiving their checks. I met a lot of grandmothers and grandfathers who kind of went, “Thank goodness, I’m going to get my check.” And then, you know what the next question is? They say, “What are you going to do about my grandkids, Mr. President? What do you and the Congress intend to do

about a group of youngsters getting ready to go into the workplace?” So I said, “The first we got to do in a reformed system is to say to future generations, ‘You’ll receive benefits equal to or greater than the benefits today’s seniors get.’” Seems to make sense to me.

Secondly, I said a reformed system must reassure future generations that those who depend most on Social Security will have the most protection in their retirement. In other words, I don’t believe anybody ought to retire into poverty. I don’t believe we ought to have a system where somebody is working all their life, and then they get a check, and it keeps them in poverty. That doesn’t make sense to me.

And so I’ve adopted the idea put out by a Democrat named Robert Pozen. I think Mr. Pozen has got a good idea, and here’s what it says. It says that the Social Security checks for the highest 1 percent of Americans will remain the same in today’s dollars as the checks received by beneficiaries today. It means no cut in benefits to the upper 1 percent. The other 99 percent of American workers will get bigger checks in today’s dollars than the current retirees, which means an increase in benefits. The top 1 percent earners would have their benefits go up at the cost of living. The lower income Americans would have their benefits go up with wages, and it would be scaled in between. And that’s important because, you see, if Congress were just to adopt that part of the proposal, it would solve, by far, the biggest problem we face in funding Social Security for the out-years.

Now, it takes other measures, and I want to work with Republicans and Democrats to look at other ways to make the system permanently fixed.

We’ve got some folks here that are dairy farmers. Jeff Grove, and his son, Caleb, are with us. Jeff is a third-generation dairy farmer. Caleb will start his first year with FFA this fall in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. Jeff and his brother, Jay, run the family farm. By the way, their mom, Anna, is here. Boys, listen to your mother.

Caleb wants to join the family business when he’s finished school. If he chooses to, Jeff could retire at 65 and start drawing benefits in 2021. Under a system with progressive

indexing, he could expect a benefit of over \$12,000 a year in today's dollars—today's dollars—compared to about \$11,000 in today's dollars for a similar worker. In other words, the program would be beneficial to Jeff. That means after adjusting for inflation, his benefits would be 10 percent higher.

What I'm trying to do is to tell you the system that Mr. Pozen has proposed goes a long way toward fixing the system, but it's a good deal for people paying into the system today.

If Caleb turns out to be a farmer just like his dad, he can expect an annual benefit of more than \$15,700 in today's dollars. In other words, the system helps us achieve what we want, permanent solvency and to say you're not going to retire into poverty. That makes sense. Under the reform proposed by Mr. Pozen, 99 percent of Americans will see their benefits grow, and no one's benefits will be cut.

It's important for Congress, if they've got a better idea, to bring it up. If you think you can do better in solving this problem, I don't care whether you're a Republican or a Democrat, put your ideas on the table. That's why they sent you to Washington, DC, in the first place.

So, I've got some ideas to permanently solve the Social Security deficit and the problem, so we can say to youngsters, "When you work and pay something into the payroll system, there will be something for you when you retire." And I've got another idea that I want Congress to consider, and that I want people in this country to listen to carefully. And it's to make sure the system is a better deal for younger workers.

Now, first, let me describe how Social Security actually works. It's called a pay-as-you-go system. You work hard, and you pay through payroll taxes, and we go ahead and spend. We spend on the benefits for retirees, and then, with the money left over, we spend on programs. See, some people think, well, the Social Security system is one where we take your money, and we hold it for you, and then when you retire, we give it back. That's not the way it works. You pay. We pay out the money for the retirees, and the money left over—see, there's money left over until 2017—it goes ahead and funds all the dif-

ferent programs of Government. And do you know what's left behind? Paper, IOUs in a file cabinet in West Virginia. [Laughter] Those are the assets of the Social Security system.

In order to make sure there's real assets in Social Security, I think we ought to allow younger workers, if they so choose, to take some of their own payroll taxes and set up a voluntary personal savings account. I think it makes sense to encourage people to build a nest egg they call their own—by the way, a nest egg the Government cannot take away, a nest egg the Government can't take and spend on programs that they like.

I'll tell you why it makes sense to allow younger workers to take some of their own money as a part of a Social Security system, if that's what they so choose, is because people can get a pretty good rate of return on a conservative mix of stocks and bonds or a portfolio of bonds only. A conservative mix of stocks and bonds can yield you 4.6 percent. By the way, you get about 1.8 percent on your money in the Government. It's a lousy rate of return compared to what a conservative mix of bonds and stocks will get you.

And the important thing about earning 4.6 percent is that over time, your money compounds. It grows, and that's important. If you're a youngster and you start saving some of your own payroll taxes—and I say, by "some of your own payroll taxes," sometimes if you listen to the rhetoric in Washington, it sounds like the people there believe the payroll tax is the Government's money. It's not the Government's money. It's the people's money. The people are working hard for that money.

Let me just give you an example. Suppose one of your brothers or sisters becomes a farmer and marries a food scientist, and they earn typical wages from both those professions. And you enter the workforce in 2011, and you work your entire career. And you're allowed to put a third of your payroll taxes aside, and it grows at 4.6 percent and compounds over time. By the time you retire, you'll have a nest egg of \$570,000—your money. It's a part of a Social Security system. It would supplement your Social Security checks, but it's your money. No one can take it away from you. It's your money. It's money

you can pass on to whomever you choose. And that's an important part of an ownership society in America.

It's important—let me tell you—let me give you an example of the Social Security system today that I think is patently unfair. You've got two folks working in their family. One of them dies before age 62. You know what the Government pays? Burial benefits, period. And then when the other spouse reaches a retirement age, he or she gets to choose the benefits from her work or his work or the spouse's work, which is ever higher, but not both. In other words, the way the system works today, you've worked all your life, and you predecease your spouse, and the spouse's benefits are greater than yours would have been, the money you earned just goes away.

That doesn't seem fair to me, that you've got Americans all across the country working hard to put bread on the table, and they get a bad break, and they die early, and the money they've contributed to the Social Security system just isn't around for the surviving spouse.

It seems like to me it makes sense to let workers, if they so choose, to take some of their own money and put it aside in a personal savings account. And if something bad happens, like early death, there would be some assets for the surviving spouse, assets he or she could live on to help the family, assets to help with the grief, and assets to make their life better in retirement.

No, the idea of giving younger workers the ability to take some of their own money and set it aside so they can watch their money grow is an idea that's already taken hold here in America. Some of us older guys, like Specter and Rendell and others here, when we were coming up, we weren't sure what a 401(k) was. There weren't any. We didn't know what IRAs were in those days. There's a whole investor class of people growing up in America, people who are used to watching their money grow. And it seems to make sense to me to make sure a modernized, reformed Social Security system for a young generation of Americans ought to incorporate this idea, if that's what they choose to do, as a part of a modern retirement system.

This isn't a new idea, by the way, in Washington, DC. I think you'll find this interesting—at least I certainly did when I started looking in on the issue—is that the United States Congress has set up what is called a Thrift Savings Plan. It's a plan that lets United States Senators and Members of the House of Representatives set aside some of their own money in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks. You know what I think? I think if that plan is good enough for Members of the United States Congress, it's good enough for workers all across America.

I've come today to tell you that there are some of us in Washington, DC, who do not want to leave you saddled with a retirement system that's going broke, that we realize we have an obligation to address this problem. I'm enjoying traveling the country talking about the Social Security issue. It gives me a chance to get out of Washington, gives me a chance to remind the skeptics and critics that there are people in Washington, DC, who care about the common good, that care about addressing problems. There are people in that Nation's Capital that have gone there for the right reason, to focus on the people's business and to come up with solutions, so that when it's all said and done, no matter what your party might be, we can say, "Job well done. We came to Washington—we didn't spend a lifetime there—we worked hard, and we did the people's business."

I'm going to continue working this issue, State after State after State. I'm going to continue to call upon the United States Congress, members of both political parties, to stand up, to do what's right for a young generation of Americans coming up, to fix this Social Security system once and for all so a young generation of Americans will have that same sense of security that previous generations had when it came time for them to retire.

There's no doubt in my mind, we're going to get this job done. And if you're interested in the subject, pay attention. Call your elected Representatives. The voice of the people can determine what takes place in Washington, DC.

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. I want to thank the members of the FFA for being

leaders, for making right choices, for setting high standards, for setting the example, and for serving the communities in which you live. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in Eisenhower Auditorium at Pennsylvania State University. In his remarks, he referred to Graham Spanier, president, and Joe Paterno, head football coach, Pennsylvania State University; Gov. Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania; and Robert C. Pozen, former member, President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Thomas B. Griffith as a United States Appeals Court Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit

June 14, 2005

I commend the Senate for confirming Tom Griffith to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Tom is an accomplished and experienced lawyer who will bring a broad range of legal experience to the court. He has served in the important post of Senate Legal Counsel, as general counsel at a major university, and in private practice. I look forward to the Senate's prompt consideration and up-or-down votes for my other judicial nominees.

Remarks at the 2005 President's Dinner

June 14, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Thank you for the warm reception. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. It's nice to have dinner with a group of friends. I appreciate you all coming here. This is a very important dinner because, through your generosity, we're going to keep control of the Senate and the House, and America will be better off for it.

I really appreciate you being here. I am sorry that the First Lady is not here. She sends her love. Generally when I say that, people groan, and I take it to mean they wish she'd have come and not me. I understand

that. I'll tell you something about Laura. She's quite the comedian, quite the diplomat. She's a heck of a First Lady and a great wife and mom. I love her dearly.

I want to thank Senator Lamar Alexander for his leadership on this incredibly successful dinner. I appreciate Speaker Denny Hastert. He is one fine man. He's a great Speaker of the House. And through your generosity, he's going to stay Speaker of the House. I want to thank the majority leader of the United States Senate, Bill Frist. He too is a great leader, and I appreciate calling him friend.

I want to thank Senator Elizabeth Dole, who is the NRSC chairman; Congressman Tom Reynolds, the NRCC chairman. Those are initials for, like, let's raise money and get the Senate in Republican—keep the Senate in Republican hands and House in Republican hands. Thank you for supporting these causes.

I want to thank the Members of the Senate and Congress for working so hard. I want to thank the Members of the—all the Members of the Congress who've joined us tonight. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here.

I want to pay special tribute to the Republican National Committee chairman, Ken Mehlman, for the fantastic job he's doing on reaching out to people from all walks of life. I want to thank the President's Dinner leadership, especially Ken Thompson and his wife, Kathylee, for the fantastic job you all have done and everybody up here has done. I want to thank the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir for being here today.

I'm proud to be the head of a party that has a positive and hopeful and optimistic vision for every single person who lives in this country. And I'm proud to be a head of a party that is driving the debate on all the key domestic and foreign policy issues. Because of our achievements, the American people see us as the party of reform and optimism and results, the party that is moving this Nation forward.

All of us in Washington have a duty to the people who sent us here. Political parties can take one of two approaches. One approach is to lead, to focus on the people's business,

to take on the tough problems. And that is exactly what our party's done.

The other approach is to simply do nothing, to delay solutions, obstruct progress, refuse to take responsibility. Members of the other party have worked with us to achieve important reforms on some issues. Yet, too often, their leadership prefers to block the ideas of others. We hear "no" to making tax relief permanent. We hear "no" to Social Security reform. We hear "no" to confirming Federal judges. We hear "no" to a highly qualified U.N. Ambassador. We hear "no" to medical liability reform. On issue after issue, they stand for nothing except obstruction, and this is not leadership. It is the philosophy of the stop sign, the agenda of the roadblock, and our country and our children deserve better.

Political parties that choose the path of obstruction will not gain the trust of the American people. If leaders of the other party have innovative ideas, let's hear them. But if they have no ideas or policies except obstruction, they should step aside and let others lead.

We're a party that's gotten things done. Because we acted to pass the largest tax relief in a generation, our economy is growing again. We've created more than 3.5 million new jobs during the last 2 years. More Americans are working today than ever before in our Nation's history.

To keep this economy growing and creating jobs, we need to make the tax relief permanent. We need to get rid of the death tax forever. And we can do something else about taxes. I've appointed a bipartisan panel to examine our incoherent, out-of-date Tax Code. When their recommendations are delivered, I'm looking forward to working with the United States Congress to give this Nation a Tax Code that is progrowth, easy to understand, and fair to all.

Our party is the party of economic growth, and our party is the party of spending restraint. I've submitted the first budget to actually cut nonsecurity discretionary spending since Ronald Reagan was the President. Now the Congress needs to act to hold nondiscretionary spending below last year's level. The budget we submitted adheres to an interesting principle. It says taxpayers' money should be spent wisely or not spent at all.

We need to have a fiscally responsible highway bill that modernizes our roads and bridges and improves safety and creates jobs. We're on our way to cutting this deficit in half in 5 years, and I want to thank the Members of Congress for holding the line and doing what's right for the American taxpayer.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we need an energy bill. Four years ago, I presented Congress with a comprehensive energy strategy that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel, that says we can use nuclear energy in a clean way, that recognizes the need to spend money on clean coal technology. It's an energy plan that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. For the sake of national security, and for the sake of economic security, Congress needs to get a bill to my desk before the August recess.

We're proudly the party of free and fair trade. During my administration and thanks to the good works of Congress, we've opened up markets for millions of consumers of U.S. products. And now we have an opportunity to continue to open up new markets with CAFTA, the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade act. Right now most of the goods coming from the Central American countries enter into our country duty-free. Yet our goods are not received in their countries duty-free. For the sake of free trade, for the sake of fair trade, for the sake of good jobs, for the sake of promoting young democracies in Central America, Congress must pass CAFTA.

Ours is the party of the entrepreneur and small business. Ours is the party of litigation reform. We're the party that continues to free our entrepreneurs from needless regulations and protect honest job creators from junk lawsuits. I applaud the Speaker and the leader for getting bipartisan class-action reform and bankruptcy reform through the Congress. Now we need asbestos litigation reform. And to stop junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of medicine, we need Federal medical liability reform.

Ours is the party that challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations, that worked to stop the practice of just shuffling kids through school, grade after grade, without

them being able to read and write. Ours is the party that set high standards, believes in local control of schools, and insists that every child learn to read and write, so no child is left behind in America.

We set a clear agenda to make health care more affordable and to give American families greater access to coverage and more control over their health decisions. In 2003, we strengthened Medicare by giving seniors more choices and adding a prescription drug benefit. We have kept our commitment to our Nation's seniors, and now we must move forward with more community health centers to help the poor, improved health information technology, expanded health savings accounts and association health plans, so that small businesses can pool risk and buy insurance at the same discount that big companies are able to do.

Ours is the party that set the goal to encourage ownership in America. We want more people owning their own business. I'm proud to report more people own a home than ever before in our Nation's history, and more minority families are owning a home today than ever before.

We need to expand ownership to our retirement system. Recently, I've been spending time talking about an important issue, and that's Social Security reform. And the reason I have is because I believe the job of the President is to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. We've got a problem when it comes to Social Security. No, you don't have a problem if you're getting your check now or if you were born prior to 1950. You'll get your check. The problem is for a younger generation of Americans who are paying payroll taxes or getting ready to pay payroll taxes into a system that is going broke.

Let me give you the math right quick, let you know why I'm talking about it all across the country. There's a lot of us getting ready to retire. We're called baby boomers. As a matter of fact, my retirement age is 2008—[laughter]—quite convenient. There are about 73 million baby boomers getting ready to retire. There are 40 million people retired today; another 33 million will be retired when the baby boomers fully retire. And we're living longer, and we've been promised

greater benefits by Congress. And the real problem is there's fewer people paying into the system. Today, there's 3.3 workers per beneficiary. Soon, there will be two workers per beneficiary. In 2017, the system goes into the red. In 2027, it's \$200 billion short. In 2041, it's bankrupt.

It is not right to sit here in Washington, DC, knowing the system is going bankrupt for younger Americans and not do anything about it. So I'm going to keep talking about it and keep putting ideas out. I've laid out some plans that would nearly fix all of the Social Security problem.

I'll tell you another idea we need to do is we need to give workers the option that Congress has given itself, and that is to be able to take some of their own money, some of their own payroll taxes and set it aside in a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account that will let them earn a better rate of return on their money, a personal savings account they can leave to whomever they want, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away or spend on special programs.

Ours is the party that believes in ownership. We want to extend the so-called investor class to all walks of life. We believe everybody should have an asset they can call their own. And we have a fantastic opportunity to strengthen and save Social Security for a generation of Americans to come and to give more Americans the great pride of owning something they call their own. Congress needs to act on this issue. Strengthening Social Security requires honesty and courage, and the party I'm proud to lead will do our duty. Our children's retirement security is more important than partisan politics.

Our party will continue to support the faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places. We'll continue to promote a culture of life in which every person is valued and every life has meaning. And we will defend the institution of marriage from being redefined forever by activist judges.

And speaking about judges, the American people made it clear they want judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. I applaud Senator Frist and Senator Specter and Senator Hatch and other

Members of the United States Senate in confirming some outstanding nominees who have waited a long time for a vote, Priscilla Owen and Janice Rogers Brown and Bill Pryor. I'll continue to urge the Senate to fulfill its constitutional responsibility by giving every judicial nominee an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

And speaking of confirmations, the Senate must promptly confirm John Bolton, my nominee to be our Ambassador to the United Nations, so we can get on with the business of reforming that institution.

My most solemn duty and the most solemn duty of those of us in Government here in Washington is to protect the American people. Our strategy is clear: We will be relentless; we will never tire in chasing down the terrorists; we will confront them abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We carried out the largest reorganization of Government in a half-century to form a single Department with a single mission, protecting America from attack. The tireless efforts of the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security and Federal and State and local first-responders—protecting our Nation and making this country more secure. And as they do so, they need to have all the tools to be able to help defend this country. And that is why I call upon the United States Congress to renew all the provisions of the PATRIOT Act.

The PATRIOT Act is an important piece of legislation. It gives those folks who are on the frontline of fighting terror the same tools, many of the same tools that are used to track down drug kingpins or tax cheats. If those tools are good enough to track down drug kingpins, they ought to be good enough in this war on terror to give to our law enforcement so we can better defend this country.

And we're making progress. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've closed down terrorist networks. We brought to justice many of the key leaders of Al Qaida. We're disrupting their finances. There is no place they can hide from the United States of America and our allies and friends.

The best way to secure this country in the long run, though, is to spread democracy and freedom. We believe everybody deserves to be free. We believe everybody has a deep

desire in their heart to live in a free society. We believe mothers all around the world want to raise their children in a free and peaceful world.

And the people of Afghanistan showed clearly the desire of those who have lived under tyranny to take the risks necessary to live in a free society. Think about how far that country has come in a brief period of time. We enforced doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." And by removing the Taliban, America and the free world are safer. But at the same time, we gave the Afghan people a chance to live in a free and democratic society. And for the first time in the history of that country, for the first time in thousands of years, millions of people went to the polls to vote. And the first voter was a 19-year-old girl in Afghanistan.

Freedom is on the march from the Ukraine to Afghanistan to the Palestinian Territory to Lebanon and to Iraq. By removing Saddam Hussein from power, America and the free world are safer. By removing Saddam Hussein from power, the people of Iraq have a chance to live in a free society. And the United States of America will stand squarely with that new democracy as it grows and flourishes and becomes a free society in the heart of the Middle East.

I know many of you here have got relatives and friends who are serving in the United States military. I can't tell you how proud I am to be the Commander in Chief of such a great group of folks. America is more secure, the world is more free, the foundations of peace are being laid because of the brave men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military.

The United States has a special obligation, in my view, to work with freedom fighters all around the world, to stand squarely with the reformers. I believe it's important for generations to come, because I understand that democracies don't fight each other, that democracies are the way to defeat hatred, that democracies provide the best hope for men and women around the world. There's no doubt in my mind the policies that this administration has taken will make the world more peaceful for generations to come.

The American people have entrusted us with the leadership of this great country at an historic moment. We've set big goals, and they're not always easy to achieve. Otherwise, they'd have been done already. But we're going to continue to be the party that sets the big goals, the party that's idealistic, the party of reform. We'll continue to lead, no matter how tough the challenge might be. You see, the American people have given us their trust. But the good news for the American people is, in our policies we trust them. We trust their values. We trust their judgment. We trust them with their own money. So long as we stay true to our values and our ideas, we will do what Americans have always done. We will build a better world for our children and our grandchildren.

It is such an honor to be the President of such a great nation. Thank you for coming tonight. May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Thompson, dinner chairman, 2005 President's Dinner, and his wife, Kathylee Thompson; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks to the 16th Annual Energy Efficiency Forum

June 15, 2005

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. John, thanks for the introduction. Thanks for the invitation to be here for the 16th annual Energy Efficiency Forum. It's an important forum. By advancing the national dialog on the future of energy, you're helping us support the cause of energy efficiency. And that's critical for our economy, and it's critical for the future of this Nation.

You see, increasing energy efficiency will help consumers save money. Increasing energy efficiency will leave American businesses with more capital, will make American businesses more competitive. Increasing energy efficiency will help reduce our energy consumption and to help us achieve a vital national goal, and that is making America less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And

that's what I want to talk to you all about today, a strategy to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I want to thank John. I want to thank Bob Catell, who is the event host. He's the chairman of the United States Energy Association. I want to thank Betty Arndt. I want to thank Barry Worthington. Thank you both for setting this event up. I want to thank the Assistant Secretary, David Garman, of the Department of Energy, for being here. I appreciate Pat Wood, the FERC Chairman. Where are you, Pat? There he is, my fellow Texan. How many children you got now? *[Laughter]* Three, one on the way? *[Laughter]*

I want to thank your fellow commissioners—Commissioner Brownell, Commissioner Kelliher, Commissioner Kelly—for joining you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for serving. Appreciate what you do.

I'm optimistic about this country's future, and Americans have a reason to be optimistic as well. Over the last 2 years, we have added more than 3.5 million new jobs. More Americans are working today than ever before in our Nation's history. Homeownership in America is at an alltime high, and that's good. We want more people owning something in America. We want more small-business owners. We want more homeowners. I, personally, think it would be good for the country if people had more control over their retirement accounts.

Small businesses are flourishing. Factory output is growing. Exports are at their highest level ever. Families are taking home more of what they earn. Because of our policies, our economy is growing and creating more opportunity and increased prosperity for millions of citizens, and that's good news.

And to build on this success and to keep this economy growing. We need an affordable, reliable supply of energy, and that starts with pursuing policies to make prices reasonable at the pump. Today, millions of American families and small businesses are hurting because of high gasoline prices. If you're trying to meet a payroll or trying to meet a family budget, even small increases at the pump have a big impact on your bottom line. For the sake of American families and American workers, this country must take action now

to deal with the causes of rising gasoline prices.

The primary cause of rising gasoline prices is that the global demand for oil is growing faster than global supply. Here in America, we have become too dependent—too dependent—on the increasingly limited supply of foreign oil for our own energy needs. For many years, most of the crude oil refined in American—into gasoline in America came from domestic oil fields. In 1985, 75 percent of the crude oil used in U.S. refineries came from American sources, only about 25 percent came from abroad. Today, that equation is nearly reversed. In a relatively quick period of time, only about 35 percent of the crude oil used in U.S. refineries is produced here at home—think about that—while about 65 percent comes from foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Canada. To compound the problem, countries with rapidly growing economies like India and China are competing for more of the world oil supply, and that drives up the global price of oil, and that makes prices of gasoline here at home even higher for our families and small businesses and farmers.

Our dependence on foreign oil is like a foreign tax on the American Dream, and that tax is growing every year. My administration is doing all we can to help ease the problem. We're encouraging oil-producing countries to maximize their production, so more crude oil is on the market to meet the demands of the world. And we're going to make sure that consumers here at home are treated fairly. There's not going to be any price gouging here in America.

But people got to understand our dependence on foreign oil didn't develop overnight, and it's not going to be fixed overnight. To solve the problem, our Nation needs a comprehensive energy policy. That's why one of the first things I did when I came to office 4 years ago was to develop a new energy strategy for America. And in my first months in office, I sent Congress a plan to put our Nation on the path to greater energy independence. For 4 years, the United States Congress has discussed and debated the plan with no result. So earlier this year, I sent a clear message to Congress: Get a good en-

ergy bill on my desk before the August recess. Now is the time for them to act.

The House has acted, and I want to thank the leadership in the House. And the Senate's turn is now up. It's now their time to get something done. And they're beginning the debate on the energy bill this week. And my advice is they ought to keep this in mind: Summer is here; temperatures are rising; and tempers will really rise if Congress doesn't pass an energy bill.

The American people know that an energy bill will not change the price of gas immediately, but they're not going to tolerate inaction in Washington as they watch the underlying problems grow worse. We have a responsibility to confront problems. The American people expect us to act in good faith here in Washington. To address the root causes of high gas prices, we need to take four important steps toward one vital goal, and that is making America less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

The first step toward making America less dependent on foreign oil is to improve conservation and efficiency. That's why this conference is an important conference, and I want to thank you for holding it. Hybrid vehicles are one of the most promising technologies immediately available to consumers. There are some interesting things taking place in the market place that will help achieve this part, this step of less dependency on foreign sources of oil. Hybrid automobiles are powered by a combination of gasoline and electricity. Some can travel twice as far on a gallon of fuel as gasoline-only vehicles. Hybrids produce lower emissions. To help consumers conserve gas and protect the environment, I proposed that every American who purchases a hybrid vehicle receive a tax credit of up to \$4,000. We're trying to encourage people to make right choices in the market place that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of oil and to help improve our environment.

We are also encouraging automakers to produce a new generation of modern, clean diesel cars and trucks. My administration has issued new rules that will remove more than 90 percent of the sulfur in diesel fuel by 2010. Clean diesel technology will allow consumers to travel much farther on each gallon

of fuel without the smoke and pollution of past diesel engines. To encourage this promising technology, Congress should extend the tax incentives for the purchase of hybrid vehicles to clean diesel cars and trucks. You see, America leads the world in technology, and we need to use that technology to lead the world in fuel efficiency.

The second step toward making America less dependent on foreign oil is to produce and refine more crude oil here at home in environmentally sensitive ways. By far the most promising site for oil in America is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Technology now makes it possible to reach the oil reserves in ANWR by drilling on just 2,000 of the 19 million acres. Developing this tiny area could eventually yield up to a million barrels of oil a day, and that million barrels of oil a day would be—would make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Thanks to technology, we can reach ANWR's oil with almost no impact on land or local wildlife. To make America less dependent, Congress needs to pass a pro-growth, pro-jobs, pro-environment development of ANWR. It makes sense. It is an important part of a comprehensive strategy.

We also need to improve our ability to refine crude oil into gasoline and other products. Do you realize this? There hasn't been a single new refinery built in America since 1976. To meet our growing demand for gasoline, America now imports about a million barrels of refined gasoline every day. That means about one out of every nine gallons of gas you get at the pump is refined in a foreign country. Not only are we dependent on foreign sources of oil, we're becoming more dependent on foreign sources of gasoline.

To help secure our gasoline supply and lower prices at the pump, we need to encourage existing refineries to expand their capacity. So the Environmental Protection Agency is working to simplify rules and regulations for refinery expansion, and I'm confident we can do so and maintain strict environmental safeguards. We also need to build new refineries. So I've directed Federal agencies to work with States to encourage the construction of new refineries on closed military facilities and to simplify the permitting process

for these new refineries. By promoting reasonable regulations, by being wise with policy, we can refine more gasoline at home, and that will make us less reliant on foreign sources of gasoline.

The third step toward making America less dependent on foreign oil is to develop new alternatives to gasoline and diesel. Two years ago, my administration launched an ambitious program called the Hydrogen Fuel Initiative. We've already dedicated \$1.2 billion over 5 years to this effort to develop hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles. Last month, I visited a hydrogen fueling station right here in Washington. I saw cars and vans that run on hydrogen fuel cells instead of gasoline. And these cars and vans emit pure water instead of exhaust fumes. The energy bill will authorize additional funds for this vital initiative. With bold investments now, we can begin to replace a hydrocarbon economy with a hydrogen economy and make it possible for our children, today's children to take the driver's test in a completely pollution-free vehicle.

We've got to be aggressive about finding alternative sources of fuel. And one such source is ethanol. Ethanol comes from corn, and we're pretty good about growing corn here in America. We've got a lot of good corn growers. Therefore, it makes sense to promote ethanol as an alternative to foreign sources of oil. Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline to produce a clean, efficient fuel. In low concentrations, ethanol can be used in any vehicle. And with minor modifications, vehicles can run on a fuel blend that includes about 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. Ethanol helps our farmers find new markets and helps us replace foreign crude oil. I mean, I like the idea of spending money on research to make ethanol more feasible, so that some day an American President says, "Show me the crop report." [Laughter] As opposed to, "How many barrels of crude oil are we importing?"

By the way, we can get the same type of alternative fuel from soybeans. It's called biodiesel, and that's a promising source of energy. I went to a biodiesel refinery in Virginia that is making fuel from soybean oil. Other producers are making biodiesel, by the way, from waste products like recycled cooking

grease. Biodiesel can be used in any vehicle that runs on regular diesel. So as you get more clean diesel engines in America, biodiesel becomes an alternative fuel for them. It burns more completely and produces less air pollution than gasoline or regular diesel.

It makes sense for the energy bill to encourage renewable sources of energy that are becoming much more practical and much more economic in today's world. To encourage greater use of ethanol and biodiesel, my administration supports a flexible, cost-effective renewable fuel standard as a part of the energy bill. This proposal would require fuel producers to include a certain percentage of ethanol and biodiesel in their fuel. I proposed \$84 million in the 2006 budget for ongoing research into advanced technologies that can produce ethanol from farms, forests, or even municipal waste dumps. We've got a chance here as we go forward to do something smart, and that is figure out ways to use that which we grow or that which we dispose of to replace foreign sources of oil.

The fourth step toward making America less dependent on foreign oil is to help other nations use technology to reduce their own demand for crude oil and gasoline. Much of the current projected rise in gasoline prices is due to rising oil consumption in Asia. These are emerging economies that are consuming more natural resources, one of which is oil. As Asian economies grow, their demand for oil is growing much faster than global supply is growing. And that drives up price. It's in our interest to help countries like India and China become more efficient users of hydrocarbons. That will help take the pressure off global supply, take the pressure off gasoline prices here at home.

At the G-8 meeting next month, I'll ask other world leaders to join America in helping developing countries find practical ways to use cleaner, more efficient energy technologies. When we lower the global demand for oil, Americans will be better off at the gas pump, and future generations will breathe cleaner air too.

As we make America less dependent on foreign oil, we are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to address other energy challenges facing our country. Along with high gas prices, many families and small businesses

are confronting rising electricity bills. Summer air conditioning costs are going to make it even more expensive to power homes and office buildings.

To help our consumers save on their power bills, we must continue expanding our efforts to improve conservation and efficiency. The energy bill would extend the Energy Star program. This program encourages the sale and production of energy-efficient products, like superefficient refrigerators that use less energy than a 75-watt light bulb. Advances in efficiency are saving American consumers more money. In 2001, the average American family spent about half as much to heat its home as it did in 1978. One day, technologies like solar panels and high-efficiency appliances and advanced insulation could even allow us to build zero-energy homes that produce as much energy as they consume.

We must also harness the power of technology to help us deliver electricity more efficiently. For example, the Department of Energy is funding research and development of superconducting power lines. It's important research because it will enable us to more efficiently move electricity. Really what we need to do is bring our electricity grid into the 21st century. Congress should make reliability standards for electric utilities mandatory, not optional. We have modern interstate grids for our phone lines and highways. It's time for this country to build a modern electricity grid so we can protect American families and businesses from damaging power outages.

To power our growing economy, we also need to generate more electricity. Electricity comes from three principal sources, coal, natural gas, and nuclear power. To ensure that electricity is affordable and reliable, America must improve our use of all three.

Coal is our Nation's most abundant energy source, and America is blessed with enough coal to last for the next 250 years. Yet, coal presents an environmental challenge. So when I ran for President in 2000, I pledged to invest \$2 billion over 10 years for research into clean coal technologies to remove virtually all pollutants from coal-fired powerplants. My budget for 2006 brings clean coal funding to 1.6 billion over 5 years—puts us

on pace to exceed my pledge. And there's no doubt in my mind we can succeed. There's no doubt in my mind this great country can use technology to be able to burn coal in environmentally friendly ways.

Congress needs to pass the Clear Skies Initiative, which is a reasonable—it's a good piece of legislation. It's sound policy. They need to pass it. And by passing it, not only will we clean the environment, but it will result in tens of billions of dollars in clean coal investments by private companies. America must invest in clean coal technology and continue to do so, to harness the power of an abundant resource.

Improving our electricity supply also means making better use of natural gas. The United States has the sixth largest proven reserves of natural gas in the world. We need to increase environmentally responsible production of natural gas from our Federal lands. And to further increase our natural gas supply, Congress needs to make clear Federal authority to choose sites for new receiving terminals for liquefied natural gas.

We need to expand our Nation's use of nuclear power. America has not ordered a nuclear powerplant since the 1970s. France, by contrast, has built 58 plants in the same period of time, and today, France gets more than 78 percent of its electricity from safe, low-cost nuclear power. It's time for America to start building again. So I've directed the Department of Energy to work with Congress to help pass legislation that will reduce uncertainty in the nuclear plant licensing process. We're also working with Congress to provide other incentives, such as Federal insurance to protect the builders of the first four new plants against lawsuits, bureaucratic obstacles, and other delays beyond their control. To build a secure energy future for America, we need to expand production of safe, clean nuclear power.

So I appreciate you letting me come by today to talk about a comprehensive strategy, a comprehensive way forward to achieve one overriding goal, and it's an important goal to achieve. And the goal is to address the root causes of higher energy costs by diversifying our energy supply and reducing our dependence of foreign sources of energy.

For the past 4 years, Americans have been paying the price for delaying a national energy policy. They've been watching their power bills go up. They've seen blackouts. And they're watching the price of gasoline rise at the pump. The energy bill will help us make better use of the energy supplies we now have and will make our supply of energy more affordable and more secure for the future. To make this promise real tomorrow, we've got to act today. Now is the time. Now is the time to stop the debate and the partisan bickering and pass an energy bill.

I look forward to working with Members of the Congress to come up with reasonable compromises on outstanding issues such as MTBE. But for the sake of national security and for the sake of economic security, the Congress needs to pass an energy bill now.

Now is the time to act. Now is the time to put a strategy—we should have done this 10 to 15 years ago. Now is the time to move. And history shows that American innovation is never in short supply. That's the good news. We're going to harness our innovative spirit in this new century, and by doing so, we will leave our children and grandchildren a cleaner, a healthier, and a more secure America.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to John M. Barth, chairman and chief executive officer, and Betty Arndt, vice president, communications, Johnson Controls, Inc.; Robert B. Catell, chairman and chief executive officer, KeySpan Corp.; and Barry K. Worthington, executive director, United States Energy Association. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth

June 15, 2005

I send greetings to all Americans celebrating Juneteenth.

Major General Gordon Granger led Union soldiers into Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, bringing the news that the Civil War

had ended and that the Emancipation Proclamation, signed over 2 years earlier, had declared all slaves to be free persons. This historic day is celebrated to remember the end of slavery. Emancipation demonstrated our country's belief in liberty and equality for every citizen, and was a profound recognition that each and every American has rights, dignity, and matchless value.

One hundred forty years later, the Juneteenth observance continues to remind us of our country's founding principles of liberty and justice for all. As we mark the anniversary of the end of servitude, we also recognize the many contributions of African Americans to our culture. African Americans have helped shape our country's character, enhanced the diversity that makes America strong, and contributed to the vitality, success, and prosperity of our Nation. Juneteenth is a day that stands for the dignity and equality of all citizens, regardless of race, so that all may share the blessings of freedom that America provides.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

June 15, 2005

Presidential Determination No. 2005-24

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b) and 7(b) of

the Act. My Administration remains committed to beginning the process of moving our Embassy to Jerusalem.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with section 7(a) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

This suspension shall take effect after transmission of this determination and report to the Congress.

George W. Bush

Memorandum on Determination To Authorize a Drawdown for Afghanistan

June 15, 2005

Presidential Determination No. 2005-25

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Determination to Authorize a Drawdown for Afghanistan

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 202 and other relevant provisions of the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act (Public Law 107-327) and section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2318, I hereby direct the drawdown of up to \$161.5 million of defense articles, defense services, and military education and training from the Department of Defense for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic

June 15, 2005

Thank you all for coming tonight. I think we're going to have a pretty special picnic here on the South Lawn. Laura and Lynne and Dick and I are really pleased you're here.

It's a chance to say thanks to the Members of Congress and their families.

I appreciate the Marine Band. I hope you've enjoyed them as much as I've enjoyed listening to them upstairs.

So enjoy the food. In about 45 minutes or so, we're going to have a celebration of American musicals, at the tent down there below. We hope you join us. WETA is going to film it, so make sure you look pretty. [Laughter]

But thanks for coming. May God bless you all and your families. Glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Following the Entertainment at the Congressional Picnic

June 15, 2005

Laura and I are pleased that you came to our backyard picnic. [Laughter] We really want to thank the Speaker, Speaker Hastert, and Senator Frist, Congresswoman Pelosi, and all the Members of Congress who joined us today. I want to thank you for your hard work, and I want to thank you for your devotion to your constituents and to our country. I look forward to continuing to work with you, as we serve the American people.

Laura and I also want to thank all the families who are with us here for your extraordinary service and sacrifice. Public service puts great demands on our families and our country is grateful to you all.

Laura and I want to thank WETA and all tonight's performers, Tom Wopat and Shirley Jones, Carolyn Blackwell, and Cartier Williams. You put on such a fantastic performance, and we're grateful.

Again, thank you all for coming. We hope you've enjoyed this evening. And may God bless your families, and may God continue to bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:30 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to actor and singer Tom Wopat; actress Shirley Jones; actress and soprano Carolyn Blackwell; and dancer Cartier Williams.

The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16.

Remarks at the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast

June 16, 2005

Gracias, y sientese. [Laughter] Thank you for the warm welcome. It's an honor to be here at the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast. Thanks for inviting me back. I understand this, like you understand this: America is founded on *los valores de fe y familia*. These are the values at the heart of the Hispanic American community. These are the values that enrich our Nation, and I am grateful.

Your good works and reverence bring compassion to our country and, more importantly, honor to the Almighty. This morning we come together to pray, to pray for God's help as we serve our fellow citizens.

Danny, thank you very much for the invitation and the introduction. I'm proud to be with a lot of the faith leaders from around our country. I saw my friend Luis Cortes. It's good to see you again, Luis. I want to thank John von Seggern, who is the chairman of the Prayer Breakfast.

I want to thank the Members of the Congress who are here, Nancy Pelosi, Chris Cannon, Hilda Solis, Rahm Emanuel, Luis Fortuno. I want to thank you all for serving our country, and thank you for setting aside politics to come and honor the Almighty through prayer.

It's good to see my old buddy, former member of the Cabinet, Ridge. Tom Ridge is with us. Good to see Hector Barreto. He runs the SBA. Go ahead and pray, and then get back to work. It's good to see Don Powell, Gaddi—who runs the FDIC, by the way—Gaddi Vasquez is the Director of the Peace Corps.

And finally, I want to pay homage to the First Lady of Panama. I want to welcome you here, Madam First Lady. Thank you for coming. We're really glad you're here. Your husband is kind of like me. We both married well. [Laughter]

We come from many faiths. In America, every religion is welcome. That's the great

thing about our country: Every faith is important. In America, people of faith have no corner on compassion, but people of faith need compassion to be true to the call to “*Ame al prójimo como a sí mismo*,” love your neighbor like you’d like to be loved yourself. That’s a universal call.

For Hispanic Americans, a love of neighbor is more than a Gospel command; it’s a way of life. We see the love of neighbor in the strong commitment of Hispanic Americans to family and the culture of life. For Hispanic Americans, families are a source of joy and the foundation of a hopeful society. We’re working to support and defend the sanctity of marriage and to ensure that the most vulnerable Americans are welcomed in life and protected in love.

We see the love of neighbor in the tireless efforts of Hispanic American faith-based and community organizations that work daily to bring hope to harsh places. In Boston, the Leon de Judah congregation mentors inner-city teens so they have a chance to realize the great dreams of America. In St. Louis, Accion Social Comunitaria helps immigrants and their children adapt to American life. In the Archdiocese of Miami, Catholic Charities ministers to people with HIV/AIDS. Inner-city Philadelphia, Cortes runs a fantastic program to help lift the spirits of every single child.

Many in the Hispanic community understand that by serving the least of *nuestros hermanos y hermanas*, that we’re serving a cause greater than ourselves. And by doing so, we’re helping all citizens have an opportunity to realize their dreams here in America.

Finally, we see the love of neighbor in tens of thousands of Hispanics who serve America in the cause of freedom. One of these was an immigrant from Mexico named Rafael Peralta. The day after Rafael got his green card, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. Think about that. While serving in Iraq, this good sergeant wrote a letter to his younger brother. He said, “Be proud of being an American. Our father came to this country, became a citizen because it was the right place for our family to be.” Shortly after writing that letter, Sergeant Peralta used his own body to cover a grenade an enemy soldier had rolled into

a roomful of Marines. This prayer breakfast, we remember the sacrifices of honorable and good folks like Sergeant Peralta, who have shown their love of neighbor by giving their life for freedom.

Hispanic Americans answer the call to service willingly, because you understand that freedom is a divine gift that carries with it serious responsibilities. And as you go about the work of repairing broken lives and bringing love into the pockets of hopelessness and despair, be strong, because you’re sustained by prayer. Through prayer—[*ap- plause*].

One of the most powerful aspects of being the President is to know that millions of people pray for me and Laura, people that I’ll never have a chance—think about a country where millions of people of all faiths, people whom I’ll never have a chance to look face to face with and say, “Thank you,” take time to pray. It really is the strength of America, isn’t it? Through prayer we ask that our hearts be aligned with God’s. Through prayer we ask that we may be given the strength to do what’s right and to help those in need.

I want to thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today. This is an important tradition to continue right here in the heart of the Nation’s Capital. I want to thank you for what you do for our Nation. *Que Dios les bendiga*, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:28 a.m. at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Danny Cortes, senior vice president, and Rev. Luis Cortes, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Esperanza USA; and Vivian Fernandez de Torrijos, wife of President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Implementing the Medicare Modernization Act

June 16, 2005

Thank you very much. Please be seated—unless you don’t have a seat. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. It’s glad—I’m glad to be back to the Department of Health and Human Services. The last time I visited here

was to witness Secretary Leavitt's swearing in. I said I'd be coming back to check up on him. *[Laughter]* I'm back. *[Laughter]* He's doing a fine job; really appreciate your leadership.

I'm grateful to the men and women of this Department for their compassion and service. Thanks for serving our country. I want to thank you all for helping us launch a vital effort to bring greater peace of mind to America's seniors and people with disabilities. Over the next 11 months, we will spread important news to everyone receiving Medicare. This great and trusted program is about to become even better. Starting this November, every American on Medicare can sign up to get help paying for their prescription drugs.

I appreciate Mike Leavitt's understanding of how important it is to spread the news. I also want to thank my friend Mark McClellan for doing such a fine job at the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services. I want to thank you all who work there with him. You've got an important job now. We've passed good law. Now it's important for people to get the news.

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who are here who are going to help spread the news to their Departments, Secretary Elaine Chao, Secretary Alphonso Jackson, Secretary Norm Mineta, Secretary Jim Nicholson. Thank you all for coming, as well as Commissioner Jo Anne Barnhart of the Social Security Administration. Welcome. Thank you all for being here.

I appreciate so very much all the other administration officials who are here. I want to thank an old family friend of ours, Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of HHS, for joining us. Louis, I was looking at that picture up there—*[laughter]*—looks like him. *[Laughter]* Tell me who the painter was—I'd like one to look like me one of these days. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Senator Craig Thomas from Wyoming for joining us. Thank you for being here, Senator. I also want to thank former Senator John Breaux for joining us. I can remember John was one of the leaders in the United States Senate in trying to bring people together to reform Medicare. I want to thank you for your help on this. I want

to thank you for being here. I particularly want to thank the leaders and representatives of the health care, faith-based and community organizations who are all going to help spread the word to our seniors about what is available. I appreciate you being here. I want to thank you for your compassion and your care for America's seniors.

I also want to welcome the Medicare beneficiaries who are here in attendance. Listen carefully, I think you're going to like what you hear.

Forty years ago—think about that, 40 years ago this summer, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, from the great State of Texas—*[laughter]*—signed a law creating Medicare to guarantee health care for seniors and Americans with disabilities. In the decades since that historic act, Medicare has spared millions of our citizens from needless suffering and hardship. Medicare is a landmark achievement of a compassionate society. It is a basic trust that our Government will always honor.

Medicare has also faced challenges. For decades, medicine advanced rapidly and grew to include innovations like prescription drugs, but Medicare didn't keep pace. As a result, Medicare recipients were left with a program based on the medicine of the 1960s. For example, Medicare would pay \$28,000 for ulcer surgery but not \$500 for the prescription drugs that eliminate the cause of most ulcers. Medicare would pay more than \$100,000 to treat the effects of a stroke but not \$1,000 for blood-thinning drugs that could prevent strokes. That's an outdated system, and it made no sense for American seniors. It made no sense for Americans with disabilities, and it made no sense for American taxpayers.

Year after year, politicians pledged to reform Medicare, but the job never got done until 2003, when members of both political parties came together to deliver the greatest advance in health care for seniors since the founding of Medicare. This new law is bringing preventive medicine, better health care choices, and prescription drugs to every American receiving Medicare. The Medicare Modernization Act renewed the promise of

Medicare for the 21st century, and I was honored and proud to sign that piece of legislation.

Over the past year, millions of Americans have started to benefit from the new Medicare program. Every senior entering Medicare is now eligible for a “Welcome to Medicare” physical. It’s a fundamental improvement, and it makes a lot of sense. Medicare patients and doctors are now able to work together to diagnose health care and health concerns right away. And there’s a simple reason: The sooner you diagnose a problem—you can treat problems before they become worse. Medicare now covers preventive screenings that can catch illness from diabetes to heart disease. Medicare is covering innovative programs to help seniors with chronic diseases like high blood pressure. I urge every senior to take advantage of these new benefits in Medicare.

In the 21st century, preventing and treating illness requires prescription drugs. Seniors know this. Yet because Medicare did not cover prescription drugs, many seniors had to make painful sacrifices to pay for medicine. In my travels around the country, I met seniors who faced the agonizing choice between buying prescription drugs and buying groceries. I met retirees who resorted to cutting pills in half. I met Americans who were forced to spend their retirement years working, just to pay for their prescriptions. These hardships undermine the basic promise of Medicare. And thanks to Medicare Modernization Act, those days are coming to an end.

To provide immediate help with drug costs, the new Medicare law created drug discount cards. Over the past year, millions of seniors have used these cards to save billions of dollars. In Missouri, I met a woman who used her discount card to buy \$10 worth of drugs for \$1.14. She was happy with the card. Another senior went to her pharmacy and spent under \$30 for medicine that used to cost about four times as much. And here is what she said: “When he got out my medicine card . . . and told me what the savings was, I about dropped my false teeth.” [Laughter]

The Medicare Modernization Act created a prescription drug benefit to replace drug

discount cards and bring savings and peace of mind to all 42 million Medicare beneficiaries. The new benefit will help every senior as well as Americans with developmental and physical disabilities and mental illnesses and HIV/AIDS. Congress scheduled the prescription drug benefit to start in January of 2006. Thanks to the leadership of Secretary Leavitt and Mark McClellan, we are on track to deliver prescription drug coverage on time to every American senior.

As Medicare’s professional staff prepares to implement the prescription drug benefit, we also must ensure that seniors are ready to take full advantage of their new opportunities. And that’s why I’ve come here today. It’s important for everyone to understand that Medicare prescription drug coverage is voluntary. Seniors can choose to take advantage of the benefit, or they can choose not to. It’s up to them.

And there’s plenty of time to make the decision. Starting on October 1st, Medicare beneficiaries will begin getting information about the new prescription drug plans available. They will receive a handbook called “Medicare and You” that includes detailed information about their options. If they like what they see and choose to get prescription drug coverage, they can enroll anytime between November 15th of this year and May 15th of next year. Beneficiaries should make their decisions as soon as they are ready, because enrolling before May will ensure that they pay the lowest possible premiums.

The Federal Government will work hard to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries understand their options. I’ve asked every agency that touches the lives of seniors or disabled Americans to devote resources to explaining the prescription drug benefit. And we need the help of people in the private sector as well. The only way to reach everyone on Medicare is to mobilize compassionate citizens in communities all over the country. And that’s why we’ve come together this afternoon to kick off a nationwide outreach campaign.

Over the next 11 months, we will unite a wide range of Americans from doctors to nurses to pharmacists to State and local leaders to pharmacists to State and local leaders to faith-based organizations. Together, we

will work to ensure that every American on Medicare is ready to make a confident choice about prescription drug coverage, so they can finally receive the modern health care they deserve.

As we spread the word about the new opportunities in Medicare, we will make it clear that prescription drug coverage will provide greater peace of mind for beneficiaries in three key ways.

First, the new Medicare coverage will provide greater peace of mind by helping all seniors and Americans with disabilities pay for prescription drugs, no matter how they pay for medicine now. On average, Medicare beneficiaries will receive more than \$1,300 in Federal assistance to pay for prescription drugs. Seniors with no drug coverage and average prescription expenses will see their drug bills reduced by half or more. The new Medicare benefits will also provide special help for seniors with the highest drug costs. Starting in January, Medicare will cover 95 percent of all prescription costs after a senior has spent \$3,600 in a year. Seniors will never be able to predict what challenges life will bring, but thanks to Medicare, they can be certain they will never have their entire savings wiped out to pay for prescription drugs.

Second, the new Medicare coverage will provide greater peace of mind by offering beneficiaries better health care choices than they have ever had. Seniors will be able to choose any Medicare prescription drug plan that fits their needs and their medical history. Seniors who want to keep their Medicare the way it is will be able to do so. Seniors using Medicare Advantage to save money will be able to keep their plans and get better drug benefits. Seniors who receive drug coverage from a former employer or union can count on new support from Medicare to help them keep their good benefits. Every prescription drug plan will offer a broad choice of brandname drugs and generic drugs. Seniors will also have the choice to pick up their prescriptions at local pharmacies or to have the medicine delivered to their home.

These options might sound familiar to some of you here at the Department. It's got to sound familiar to Members of the United States Congress. After all, these health care choices, these kind of choices are available

for people who work here in Washington. And if these choices are good enough for people who work here in Washington, they ought to be good enough for the seniors all across the country.

Third, the new Medicare coverage will provide greater peace of mind by extending extra help to low-income seniors and beneficiaries with disabilities. For years, beneficiaries on the tightest budgets received no help from Medicare to pay for prescription drugs. Because we acted, about a third of American seniors will be eligible for a Medicare drug benefit that includes little or no premiums, low deductibles, and no gaps in coverage. On average, Medicare will pick up the tab for more than 95 percent of prescription drug costs for low-income seniors. To receive this important assistance, low-income seniors have to fill out a straightforward, four-page application form with, at most, 16 questions. No financial documents or complicated records are required, and the forms are easy to obtain. In fact, millions of applications have already been mailed to low-income seniors. If you or a family member receives one of these, I urge you to fill it out and send it in. Some of the seniors groups that are here have a saying, "When in doubt, fill it out." [Laughter] By encouraging all low-income seniors to sign up for extra assistance, we will ensure that Medicare gives its greatest help to those with the greatest needs.

With all of these essential reforms, the Medicare Modernization Act created a new commitment to seniors and Americans with disabilities, and all of you are helping to make good on that commitment. By lending a hand to neighbors in need, you are strengthening your communities and showing the great compassion of our country. Many organizations have already launched innovative efforts to reach seniors. And I'll continue to call on people to put forth innovative strategies to reach our seniors.

For example, in Wisconsin and Indiana, more than 270 community leaders are coming together to find ways to get information to rural seniors. In Chicago, a food pantry, the Catholic Archdiocese, and a news publication are all working to get the word out

about the new Medicare benefits. The Federal Department of Transportation, under the leadership of Norm Mineta, is working with local agencies to post Medicare information in buses and at highway rest stops. Thousands of pharmacies are working with Medicare to provide information for seniors. Countless other organizations are holding community events and connecting with seniors face to face, so Medicare recipients can get their questions answered and make informed choices about prescription drug coverage. In other words, we're on a massive education effort, starting today. And I'm asking for America's help.

You can help by making a call to your mother or father and tell them what's available. You can help by showing an older neighbor how to fill out a form. You can help by spending an afternoon at the local retirement home. And by the way, when you help somebody, you're really helping yourself. You can get information 24 hours a day calling 1-800-MEDICARE. It's pretty easy to remember, 1-800-MEDICARE. Or you can use the Internet to visit the official Medicare web site at medicare.gov. All you've got to do is type in medicare.gov, and you're going to find out what I'm talking about.

Remember that information about prescription drug plans will be available starting October 1st, and November 15th is the first day to sign up for the new coverage. You need to circle those dates on your calendar and tell the seniors in your life that modern medicine is on the way. This is a good deal, and people need to take advantage of it.

I think the passage of the Medicare Modernization Act is a good lesson for all of us who work in this city. You know, it wasn't all that long ago the leaders who talked about Medicare reform faced a lot of name-calling—to say the least. When Congress finally rose above politics and fulfilled its duty to America's seniors, it showed what's possible in Washington, DC. We need that same spirit—[*applause*]. I mean, this bill is proof that Americans really aren't interested in seeing one party win and another party lose. What Americans want to see is people coming together to solve problems. That's what they want to see.

We had a problem in Medicare. It wasn't working the way it should. It wasn't modern. It wasn't answering the needs of our seniors. And by coming together, we have done our job here in Washington. And as a result of working together, we have changed Medicare for the better. Medicare is now modern, reformed, and compassionate. And I urge all seniors—all seniors and those folks here in America who want to help seniors, look into this new prescription drug benefit; it will make your life better.

Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Statement on the Presidential Elections in Iran

June 16, 2005

In recent months, the cause of freedom has made enormous gains in the broader Middle East. Millions of people in Afghanistan and Iraq defied terrorists to cast their ballots in free elections. Palestinians voted for a new President who rejects violence and is working for democratic reform, and the people of Lebanon reclaimed their sovereignty and are now voting for new leadership. Across the Middle East, hopeful change is taking place. People are claiming their liberty. And as a tide of freedom sweeps this region, it will also come eventually to Iran.

The Iranian people are heirs to a great civilization—and they deserve a Government that honors their ideals and unleashes their talent and creativity. Today, Iran is ruled by men who suppress liberty at home and spread terror across the world. Power is in the hands of an unelected few who have retained power through an electoral process that ignores the basic requirements of democracy.

The June 17th Presidential elections are sadly consistent with this oppressive record. Iran's rulers denied more than a thousand people who put themselves forward as candidates, including popular reformers and women who have done so much for the cause of freedom and democracy in Iran.

The Iranian people deserve a genuinely democratic system in which elections are

honest—and in which their leaders answer to them instead of the other way around. The Iranian people deserve a truly free and democratic society with a vibrant free press that informs the public and ensures transparency. They deserve freedom of assembly, so Iranians can gather and press for reform and a peaceful, loyal opposition can keep the Government in check. They deserve a free economy that delivers opportunity and prosperity and economic independence from the state. They deserve an independent judiciary that will guarantee the rule of law and ensure equal justice for all Iranians. And they deserve a system that guarantees religious freedom, so that they can build a society in which compassion and tolerance prevail.

Today, the Iranian regime denies all these rights. It shuts down independent newspapers and web sites and jails those who dare to challenge the corrupt system. It brutalizes its people and denies them their liberty.

America believes in the independence and territorial integrity of Iran. America believes in the right of the Iranian people to make their own decisions and determine their own future. America believes that freedom is the birthright and deep desire of every human soul. And to the Iranian people, I say: As you stand for your own liberty, the people of America stand with you.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority.

Proclamation 7911—Father's Day, 2005

June 16, 2005

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Being a father is a great responsibility and a great joy. From the moment their children are born, fathers face the daily tasks of being mentors, protectors, providers, and friends. Fathers take great pride in watching their children take their first steps, learn to read, and attend their first day of school. On Father's Day, our Nation honors fathers across

America, and we express our deep gratitude for their selfless love and sacrifices.

Caring, decent, and hardworking fathers give much of themselves. By offering unconditional love and providing guidance and discipline, a father is a source of stability and one of the most important influences on his children. A father's example helps shape the character and values that his children will carry with them into adulthood, and the lessons he teaches remain with them for a lifetime. By encouraging his sons and daughters to set high standards, work hard, and make good decisions, a father shows his children that they can meet life's challenges and be good citizens.

Responsible fatherhood is essential to a compassionate society in which all children are surrounded by love and taught the importance of respect, honesty, and integrity. My Administration commends all those who are working to strengthen the bonds between fathers and their children.

On Father's Day and all year long, we honor our Nation's fathers and express our love and appreciation for them. We also honor the many proud fathers who are serving our country on the front lines of freedom. We are grateful for their service and sacrifice, and we pray for them and their families. These men have answered a great call, and they set an example of duty and honor for all Americans.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with a joint resolution of the Congress approved April 24, 1972, as amended (36 U.S.C. 109), do hereby proclaim June 19, 2005, as Father's Day. I direct the appropriate officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on this day. I also call upon State and local governments and citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:40 a.m., June 17, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 20.

**Executive Order 13379—
Amendment to Executive Order
13369, Relating to the President's
Advisory Panel on Federal Tax
Reform**

June 16, 2005

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to extend the reporting deadline of the President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Section 5 of Executive Order 13369 of January 7, 2005, is amended by deleting "July 31, 2005" and inserting in lieu thereof "September 30, 2005".

Sec. 2. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 16, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:40 a.m., June 17, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on June 20.

**Remarks in a Discussion on
Implementing the Medicare
Modernization Act in Maple Grove,
Minnesota**

June 17, 2005

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the warm day too. [*Laughter*] It's good to be back in the great State of Minnesota. Thanks for coming. I think you're going to find this to be an interesting discussion we're about to have about Medicare. We're here to say to the seniors who

live here in Minnesota and around the country that Medicare has been strengthened, reformed, and modernized, and we hope you take a look at it—the new program, because it's going to benefit a lot of people.

So what you're about to see is Government in the process of educating folks about what's available, and I want to thank my fellow panelists for being here. I think you're going to be find this to be an interesting discussion.

Before I begin, I just want you to know that Laura sends her best. She's doing great, working on some new comedy material. [*Laughter*] But I'm really proud of her, and she and I are having the times of our life representing the United States of America, and I'm really lucky to have her by my side.

I want to thank the Governor for being here. Governor, thanks for coming, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for serving. We've got the secretary of state here. Mary, thanks for being here. Oh, there she is. Hi, Mary. Thank you for coming. We've got the mayor, mayor of Maple Grove. I saw the mayor come in. Mayor—there he is. I appreciate you being—sitting by your old classmate. Thanks for having us. I want to thank all the folks who serve in the statehouse and local government. I appreciate you serving your State. I really want to tell you to thank your families. It's not easy to be in public office, and it's not easy to be in public office if you're a family member. But thanks for serving.

I really want to thank the folks here at Maple Grove for letting us come by. It's not easy to host the President. [*Laughter*] It turns out his entourage is quite big these days. [*Laughter*] But I really want to—thank you for letting us do this. I think you're going to find this will help the seniors who use this fantastic facility. It will help them at least understand there's new options available to them when it comes to making sure there's a prescription drug benefit available to them.

I want to thank Mark. I'm going to talk a little bit about Mark in a second here, but I want to thank Rhonda Whitenack, who is the Social Security Administration training instructor. I just was with Rhonda and some folks who have taken time out of their lives to learn what is available in this new program. See, this is a part of a grassroots effort to

educate people, to explain to people what I'm about to explain to you. So, Rhonda, thank you very much. I want to thank Greg Chesmore of the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services, training instructor. [Laughter] His job is to instruct people, to educate people. That's his job. He works with Mark.

I want to thank Lisa Jost, who is the manager of this fantastic facility. I want to thank—thank you all for coming. I'm tired of thanking people. I appreciate you being here.

By the way, I met John and Agnes Jurek. Where are they, the Jureks? I know they were at the airport. I think they came here with us. There they are. Thank you all for coming today. These are good folks who have volunteered for years in the Minneapolis area. They volunteer at the veterans center. See, they're volunteering to make somebody's life better. And the reason I've asked them to come and the reason why at the airport I thanked them for their volunteer work is if you really want to serve our country or your community, volunteer. Take time out of your life to help somebody. Teach a child to read. Feed the hungry. Find shelter for the homeless, and you will do a huge service to our country.

See, the greatest strength about—the greatest thing about America is the fact that we've got people with such wonderful hearts, that they are willing to take time out of their lives, just like John and Agnes. And so John and Agnes, thanks for setting such a good example. We're proud you all are here.

So Medicare worked for a lot of folks. But the problem is, medicine started to change, and Medicare wouldn't change with it quick enough. And I always believed since the Federal Government had made a commitment to elders to provide health care, that the health care we provide ought to be the best possible health care. In other words, if you're going to provide something, you ought to give it the best shot you can, and we weren't doing that when it came to Medicare.

And I'll get you an example about one of the reasons why I became involved in this issue and called upon Congress to modernize the Medicare system. You know, the Government would pay \$28,000 for ulcer surgery—

I don't know if I got the right number, but it's close to that—but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the ulcer surgery from being needed in the first place. Or the Government would pay \$100,000 for heart surgery but not the \$1,000 a year necessary to stop the heart surgery from being needed in the first place, and that didn't seem to make sense to me. That's an example of what I mean by the system was outdated, and it wasn't doing what it was supposed to do.

I believe those of us in public life have a responsibility to fix problems. I saw a problem, and fortunately, members of both political parties came together to fix this problem, to modernize Medicare.

Now, let me tell you what the Medicare—the new Medicare bill means. The first thing that happened in the Medicare bill is we—for the first time the Federal Government decided to provide help for preventive care. In other words, it's a simple concept here. Let's give you a diagnosis early when you sign up for Medicare so that if you've got a problem, we'll cure it early before it becomes acute.

And so there is a Medicare preventive care provision now available for seniors. And I urge seniors to take advantage of this part of the Medicare program. In other words, get a checkup. When you sign up for Medicare, get the free checkup that will make it easier for docs to solve your—any long-term health problems you have. In other words, the sooner you find out what you got, the quicker it can be solved. And by the way, that saves taxpayers money. When we can solve a problem early, it will save our taxpayers money. And so that's why we put preventive care as a part of Medicare. It's called "Welcome to Medicare" physical. That's what you—that's what you're notified. When you sign up, you get "Welcome to Medicare," and then you go take your physical, which the Government pays for.

I hope people are beginning to understand why that makes sense. I think it made sense, and I appreciate the Congress putting that part of the Medicare Modernization Act.

Secondly, we provided discount cards for seniors. We said, "Look, if you're somebody

relying upon prescription drugs, here's a discount card." And a lot of seniors saved a lot of money. But what's taken place as a result of this law is we're replacing the discount card with a new prescription drug benefit as a part of Medicare. And that's what I want people to understand, and that's what we're talking about.

This bill provides seniors with better choices. In other words, I like the concept of saying to a senior, "If you want to sign up for this benefit, you can. If you don't want to, that's fine too." It's voluntary. Secondly, if you want to buy your health care through something like Medicare Advantage, we're strengthening Medicare Advantage plans for you. In other words, the more choices people have, the better off it is in the marketplace. That's what this bill does.

This bill also will help those of you who are receiving prescription drugs from a labor union or corporate America, by helping those entities fulfill their responsibility to the contracts they made with you. In other words, it recognizes people are going to get their medicines in a variety of different ways. And so therefore, the bill strengthened options for people. And that's good.

If you're—on the average, the folks who sign up for this prescription drug benefit are going to save \$1,300 a year. For the first time, for the first time in Medicare's history, there will be stop-loss, kind of catastrophic care. If you're paying—once you pay \$3,600 in Medicare for prescription drugs, the Government picks up 95 percent of all the costs over the \$3,600. See, that's important, isn't it? We don't want a system where if you're relying upon prescription drugs and your drug costs get out of control, it just wipes out a senior. So this is a plan that says for folks, "Sign up. You get a good benefit." It will—it's, on average, \$1,300 worth of savings, plus a stop-loss plan, catastrophic care, so that if something goes wrong, the Government steps in after \$3,600 and pays 95 percent of the costs. It will bring people peace of mind, by the way.

You know, one of the great complaints we heard about not covering prescription drugs is that oftentimes, people could get wiped out because of high drug bills. And this will

give seniors ease of mind. That makes sense in a good retirement system.

Let me talk about—and by the way, what I haven't really referred to is what happens to low-income seniors. And this is why we're beginning the dialog early. And the reason why we're beginning the dialog early on a Medicare plan that becomes available next November is because we want low-income seniors to fill out some paperwork to justify their participation in the program as a low-income senior. That's really what we're doing. That's why we're kind of starting here in June, because the plan for low-income seniors is a really good deal. I mean, it's a good deal for everybody, but it's a really good deal for low-income seniors. After all, the Government is going to pay over 95 percent of all pharmaceutical costs for qualified seniors. That makes sense, doesn't it? You don't want people choosing between medicine and food. If the health care system has modernized, why not make the modern health care system available for all people, all seniors.

And that's precisely what we're doing. This says, if you qualify, and therefore you've got to fill out some paperwork to qualify—generally when people hear that the Government is saying, "Fill out some paperwork to qualify," it makes people nervous. I think you'll find that the forms that the Government has designed to decide whether you qualify or not are pretty darn simple, particularly for Government. I mean, they are four pages, and therefore, it shouldn't frighten people to take a look at these forms.

But I understand a lot of people who have retired aren't really interested in change at all. There's some people who feel that way. And therefore, one of the reasons why I've come to this center is to encourage caregivers and sons and daughters and community and faith-based groups to help seniors understand, one, what's available in the new program, and, two, to encourage seniors to fill out the simple, four-page form so that they can take advantage of this good deal.

And it's a good deal. This isn't political talk; this is true. And I encourage people to take a look at this program. Just ask the folks that have—we're about to ask some folks, by the way, about why this makes sense for people to sign up.

I've come to Minnesota to begin an education process, starting—right now the forms are going out, by the way, to help people qualify for this prescription drug benefit. Now, all people qualify for it, but if you happen to be low-income, you get 95 percent or more of the prescription drugs paid for by the Government. Starting October 1st, information about all the variety of plans will go out. People will then be allowed to start signing up for the new Medicare plan starting November the 15th. January 1st, the benefit kicks in. And you have until May 15th to sign up so you can get the good deal on the prescription drug plans.

And it takes a while to get this to sink in. We've been having Medicare one way for a long period of time, and change isn't easy. So you're watching—what you're watching is you're watching the Government begin to try to change people's attitudes toward Medicare and to get them to take a look at this new benefit.

Yesterday in Washington, I kicked the deal off with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and one of the things that I was pleased to see there at the Johnson building was the number of faith-based groups that were there, community-based groups. I just happened to meet some of the members of the Salvation Army, by the way, one of the great armies of compassion in the world. And so as this advances, and if you're a part of a faith-based or community-based program and you're interested in serving your community, find out how best you can explain what's going on to seniors. It would be a significant contribution, I would think, to the welfare of the society in which you live that this is a good deal, as to how to convince people to sign up for this good deal. This country can do a lot of amazing things when people put their mind to it, and this is a call, because by responding to the call, you're going to help make somebody's life a lot better.

Now, Mark McClellan, he's—you've got to have a smart guy around you all the time, and he happens to be one. He's a Ph.D. Yes, he's got a Ph.D. and a medical degree. Now, for those of you who are interested to know how Government works, I want you to pay attention to this. See, he's got the Ph.D. and the medical degree, and I'm the C student.

[*Laughter*] Notice who's the adviser and who's the President. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, McClellan is a good man. He's from—raised in Texas, Austin, Texas. He is in charge of making sure that the Medicare bill we passed is fully implemented and that people all across the country understand what's available. Mark, why don't you add some wisdom here.

Dr. Mark McClellan. Well, you've already added a lot of wisdom, Mr. President.

The President. He was wise to say that about the President. [*Laughter*] Go ahead, talk about the implementation plan and stuff, so people—

Dr. McClellan. One of the things that I'm spending a lot of time on is going around the country for many of the meetings just like this that we're having today to help people find out about the new coverage. And there are two big phases in what we're doing, just as what the President was talking about.

Right now we want to make sure people are aware of what's coming. There are a lot of people who have Medicare, a lot of family members of people with Medicare who don't realize that the Medicare coverage is starting on January 1st and that it's available for everybody, no matter how they pay for their drugs today.

And we especially want to start early, as the President said, to reach people with limited means. We are providing some very comprehensive drug coverage for them. There's no premiums, no or little deductibles, and people will pay only a few dollars for their prescriptions. And we want to make sure they all take advantage of it.

This is a real partnership effort, and it's because of organizations like the ones we're working with here, like the Social Security Administration, like our staff at the Center for the Medicare and Medicaid Services all around the country, and many of the non-governmental groups that we're working with, that we think we can reach everyone so that they can make a confident decision about the new coverage that's coming.

The President. Yes, I told Mark—I said, "Look, your job is to make sure everybody understands what's available. And if I can help, I will." And so he's responsible, and his agency is responsible for getting the word

out. And we're beginning to—this is it. This is day two. You're right here in the beginning. I'm confident we're going to get significant market penetration when it's all said and done. I think people, when it's all said and done, are going to understand, but we need your help. In other words, if we rely only on the Federal Government to get out the word, it's not going to work. The Federal Government can help. We've sent out mailings thus far to—what have we done?

Dr. McClellan. Working with Social Security, we've sent out mailings to close to—to millions of beneficiaries who are probably going to qualify for this extra help for people with limited incomes. And then we're sending out a lot of information to people who are helping educate seniors and helping educate the family members of seniors about the new coverage that's coming.

So this is a very comprehensive grassroots effort. As we like to say, we're trying to reach seniors and the people who care about them—where they live, work, pray, and play. And this goes for seniors all over the country. It goes for the people with a disability who are on Medicare and depend on Medicare for their medical care. And we're starting early so that we can reach all of them.

The President. So in other words, we've had a mailing out—and by the way, if you've got a mom or a dad who may have misplaced their mailing or you didn't get your mailing, there's an easy way to make sure that the information that is coming out of Washington to help you gets to you, and that is to call 1-800-MEDICARE and ask for the application form. If you're a caregiver and you want to get on the Internet, medicare.gov will enable you to get these forms, get the information to the people. In other words, just because somebody got rid of the mailing—didn't open the mail right or lost the mailing, doesn't mean you shouldn't get the mailing. It's worthwhile, believe me. This information is important information to improving somebody's life.

He talked about—what was that—it was kind of an alliterative phrase there—"play, pray, and"—

Dr. McClellan. Live, work, pray, and play, Mr. President.

The President. "Live, work, pray, and play," good. Well, that's what happens here at Maple Grove Community Center, isn't that right, Kris? Thank you for having us. Kris is the senior—what are you? What do you do?

Kristine Orluck. Mr. President, I'm the senior coordinator here at the Maple Grove Park and Recreation Department.

The President. Good. It's quite a varied facility, isn't it? You said you go from pre-K to a senior center.

Ms. Orluck. That's correct, from preschool to teen centers to senior centers.

The President. Great. And tell me about—you develop—what's your job? What do you do?

Ms. Orluck. What I do here at the community center is I'm in charge of developing the senior programs that happen around here. So it may be a fitness class. It may be a social recreation program, a trip. It may be an educational class, like a computer class, or a great decisions discussion group, or it's a wellness and health program, where we bring people in to educate them about various topics on wellness and health, and Medicare is one of those topics that we cover.

The President. Now, you see why I've asked Kris to come up here. Anybody who's interested in doing their duty, working at a senior center, pay attention to what Kris is going to tell you. See, she understands if part of the deal is to educate people, there's no better subject than a modern Medicare bill that's going to help a lot of people with their prescription drugs.

Kris and I were talking backstage. She is all fully prepared to use the time she has allotted with the seniors to say, "Here's what's available." Isn't that right?

Ms. Orluck. That's correct. We're currently working with the local Social Security Administration to provide education and also opportunities to register, so they'll be able to meet one on one with individuals and just come in as a group and hear about the changes and how it affects them and their—

The President. There are a lot of senior centers all across America, a whole lot. And part of the effort to educate our seniors is to reach out to the senior centers. One of

the reasons we used the senior center here is to say to folks who have got a senior center in Texas or anywhere else, "Do your duty. Find out what we're talking about, and then educate people." And I'm confident that when the senior centers realize what's available and realize how easy it is to get information and how simple it is to pass on the information, that people across the country will respond to describe to seniors the new prescription drugs and give seniors the option, the choice.

Listen, all we want to do is pass information so people can make a rational choice. If you're a son or a daughter, help your mom and dad make rational choice.

I tried that on my mother, and it didn't work. [Laughter] And I bet it wouldn't work on you, right, Dorothy?

Dorothy Bourgeois. It may. [Laughter]

The President. Dorothy is living here. She's retired.

Ms. Bourgeois. I'm retired for about 10 years now.

The President. Are you?

Ms. Bourgeois. Yes.

The President. And so you come here to the center?

Ms. Bourgeois. Oh, I come here to the center sometimes, and I do some volunteer work here with Medicare.

The President. Thanks for volunteering, by the way. How about that as an example. You're never too old to volunteer. In her case, you're never too young to volunteer. [Laughter]

"Welcome to Medicare" physical. People understand that yet?

Ms. Bourgeois. I think they're talking about it somewhat. And when I—working with the seniors in trying to help them to decide what insurance they need and so forth, that's one of the things that we cover.

The President. Yes, you see, the way this is going to work is there's going to be a lot of Dorothys around. She's going to take the information that we provide—she's going to be the mentor. She's probably got a heck of lot more credibility than a lot of other people do with her buddies. And so she's going to look at the information, and she's going to sit down and say, "Take a look."

And if you want to help, become a Dorothy and explain to these people. First of all, you know, the main line of education—or the frontline of education is going to be sons and daughters. Do your duty. Help your mom and dad. That's what you're supposed to do. They helped you. Now you help them. And I think you're going to find you will have done a good service.

Keep rolling. You're on a roll there.

Ms. Bourgeois. Yes, I've enjoyed it. I've been doing it for about 6 years, so I do enjoy doing it.

The President. Right. And you're beginning to learn of the new Medicare plan, I take it?

Ms. Bourgeois. Yes.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Bourgeois. Yes, we're learning a lot about it, and we're starting to get questions on it now.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Bourgeois. Just recently.

The President. And therefore, Mark's job is to make sure that people like Dorothy have got the answers to the questions. And if not, 1-800-MEDICARE or medicare.gov will have the answers.

Ms. Bourgeois. Yes——

The President. Are you Internet savvy?

Ms. Bourgeois. A little bit.

The President. Yes, probably more than——

Ms. Bourgeois. Not as much as I'd like to be.

The President. Well, here's a challenge for you. Why don't we set up a little computer center here, you know?

Ms. Bourgeois. She has one.

The President. Oh, she does have one. [Laughter] So it's not her fault. It's yours. [Laughter]

Ms. Bourgeois. I need a refresher course.

The President. Yes, that's right. [Laughter] I think it's—I think, Dorothy, when you analyze the drug benefit, it's going to help everybody. You've just got to understand that. And it's particularly going to be beneficial for low-income seniors.

You probably think I'm getting a little repetitive here. I have found in my line of work, you need to repeat things a lot so people listen. [Laughter] And you just keep saying it

and saying it and saying it so people will take a look. This is an important benefit. This is a change—a positive change for Medicare. We've strengthened the system. We've modernized the system by making prescription drugs available for all seniors in a very cost-effective way but particularly for the lower income seniors.

And one place where there are a lot of seniors that go is to the pharmacies. We've asked two folks who work for pharmacies to come and visit with us because I want to remind those in the pharmaceutical business, the disbursement business, the retail business, that it's to your interest to educate people on the drug plan available and that I think you have a duty.

I want Steve Preston—I want to introduce Steve Preston.

First of all, thanks, Dorothy. You did a fine job. Unless you got something else to day.

Ms. Bourgeois. No, I'll let you do the talking.

The President. Okay, thank you. [*Laughter*] Anyway—[*laughter*].

Steve is—fair to say an entrepreneur? Small-business guy?

Steven Preston. You could put it that way.

The President. Yes, well, that's good. I happen to think it's a positive word.

Mr. Preston. It is. I love it.

The President. Yes. Small-business guy. Where do you live?

Mr. Preston. Duluth, Minnesota. We've got—

The President. Right, spent some quality time there.

Mr. Preston. —seven pharmacies there.

The President. Seven pharmacies. Great. And you—well—speak. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Preston. Okay. I'm Steve Preston. I've been a pharmacist for almost 30 years now. I've got seven pharmacies in the Duluth/Superior area. Six of them are retail. One of them takes care of nothing but nursing home patients. And—

The President. Yes, and so you see people come to your counters—

Mr. Preston. We see them every day.

The President. Every day.

Mr. Preston. Every day, yes.

The President. And I thought you said something very compelling—this isn't the first time I met Steve. I saw him behind stage. Anyway, it's—you said something very compelling to me about watching seniors struggle.

Mr. Preston. We see them every day struggle with the costs and making choices as to how they're taking their medicines and skipping days and skipping—not getting their prescriptions at all. And it just drives us crazy that we've been at this point where we could never do anything to help them other than just cut our—to our costs. And so it's going to be wonderful that there's a program out there to help all seniors, let alone the ones that need it the most.

The President. Yes, and this is—and so therefore, one of the reasons why I've asked Steve to come is that I encourage the folks at the pharmacies to get the information in hand to distribute to your customers. If you see somebody hurting, this will help them not hurt. This is a good deal. And again, I recognize that part of the problem we have is to convince people who don't really—some people don't want to change. I know that. You know, you kind of get set in your ways, and it's just kind of inconvenient to change. But in this case, take a look at the change. Take a look at this program because it's worthwhile. And as Steve said, I guess you see people having to make these tough choices.

Mr. Preston. Yes, and our pharmacists are going to be very knowledgeable as to where to contact and how to get enrolled in this program. When the drug discount plan came up, we were instrumental in getting a lot of the people that really needed the help involved in that program.

The President. Saved some money.

Mr. Preston. Including my own father.

The President. That's good.

Q. And he—

The President. By the way, let me stop you on that. "Including my own father," I mean, that should be, you know, this is what we expect sons to be doing, isn't it, saying, "Hey, Dad, it's an interesting way to make your life better." Sons and daughters must participate in helping their moms and dads or grandparents understand what's available.

I mean, this is a chance to do our duty. I'm going to try to handle my mother. He handled his father. And so—[laughter]—keep rolling.

Mr. Preston. And that wasn't always real easy with him, because I was sending him his prescriptions anyway, but he didn't want me absorbing the cost of them. It bothered him a whole lot.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Preston. And so when I enrolled him in the program, he thinks it's great now. Now he takes everything on time. In fact, he calls me now and asks me to make sure I send them because he's getting down to a week or two.

The President. The drug discount card has worked for 6 million seniors. Now there's about 42 million on Medicare. And so you can see the scale of work we've got to do. We've got to go from the 6 million to make sure this message gets to 42 million. That's why I'm asking for your help. That's why I'm asking for Steve's help. I see other pharmacists here. I want to thank you all for coming. This is a great chance for you, a really good opportunity to take the information and lay it out to your customers. I mean, not only will you make sure you've got a customer; you'll make sure you've done somebody a good service as well.

Thanks, fine job. Anything else you want to offer?

Mr. Preston. Not at all.

The President. You've been a pharmacist for 30 years?

Mr. Preston. Almost 30.

The President. Yes, started when you were 12? [Laughter]

Anyway, Tamera Shumaker.

Tamera Shumaker. Yes.

The President. Tamera, what do you do?

Ms. Shumaker. I work at Walgreen's as a pharmacist also.

The President. Pharmacist, right?

Ms. Shumaker. That's correct.

The President. Little competition here. Nothing like a little competition to keep the economy going, by the way. [Laughter] But you're also a caregiver for your mom, you told me?

Ms. Shumaker. I am, and that's why I'm sitting here. I am 30 years old, and I have

a mother that's going to be 54 in a couple weeks. And she suffers from a mental illness, and so medications are a big part of her daily life. And I have been able, because there are so many available programs out there, I've been able to get her on disability, which is a great program. And with disability, she can be eligible for Medicare. And because she doesn't have the assets to pay for them, when this new program comes out in January, she will be getting her prescriptions free of charge, which is a nice burden taken off myself and my brothers and the rest of the family.

The President. Yes, see, it's interesting. This program is obviously for older folks but also for the disabled as well. That's why Tamera is here, and her mom qualifies. Now, her job as the caregiver is to find all this information out, take the form—right? I'm kind of leading you along here.

Ms. Shumaker. Absolutely. Well, it—

The President. Not even a lawyer, and I'm leading the witness. [Laughter]

Ms. Shumaker. Part of it is that when my mom gets forms that come in the mail and they're five, six, seven pages long, she becomes very overwhelmed very easily. And so immediately it usually goes into the trash, and she doesn't even remember that she's gotten the information. So I feel it's very important if someone can step up and help them through that process, because it's so overwhelming for them that it's a lot easier for me to come in, for me to go onto the Internet, which she wouldn't even know how to turn the computer on, but people to do that and get that information out there and get it set up. And it makes her feel really well, also, because she doesn't have to rely on us.

The President. Yes, see, this is what it's going to take to get people to understand what's available, the spirit you've just heard here. You've got the community center; people come—people come to get exercise. They come to do all projects. One project that we're going to make sure that the community centers do is "look at what's available" project, the new Medicare project. I don't know what you call it, but just make sure it happens.

Then we've got the volunteer. We got the volunteers, people who take time out of their lives to help somebody. No better way to help somebody, no better way to make somebody's life better than to find a senior and say, this is a—that doesn't understand the program, and say, "This is available for you." It's a fantastic opportunity.

Then we've got the small-business guy who sees a lot of people that are going to benefit from this program. So he's now—he's not going to say, "What can I sell you?" He's now going to say, "Here's how I'm going to help you. Here's what I'm going to do as a citizen who cares deeply about my community, how I'm going to help you."

And then we got the daughter, and sons and daughters—I keep saying this, I know, but we've got responsibilities in our society. Those of us who have been—who are coming up have got responsibilities to those who raised us, I think. A healthy society is one in which people assume responsibility, and there's no greater responsibility than loving your mom or dad. And the best way to love a mom or a dad is to learn about this drug benefit in Medicare and help them—help them apply for it, and you will have done your duty as well.

I want to thank you all for coming. I hope you got the message. The message is, there's good help coming. The law has been passed. I proudly signed it. Starting October the 1st, the different programs available for seniors will become available. In the meantime, fill out a form to qualify for the low-income benefit which will then be available, starting January the 1st. These are a lot of dates, I know, but it's not all that many. November the 15th, the program opens for enrollment. You have until May 15th so you can get the discount on the drugs. And I urge you to pass the word, and I urge you to participate. And I urge our seniors in Minnesota and all across the country to make sure you take a look at this new Medicare bill. It's going to help your life a lot.

Thank you all for coming today. I thank our panelists. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. at the Maple Grove Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer;

Mayor Mark Steffenson of Maple Grove, MN; and Lisa Jost, community center manager, Maple Grove Community Center.

Executive Order 13380— Implementing Amendments to Agreement on Border Environment Cooperation Commission and North American Development Bank

June 17, 2005

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 533 of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 3473), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Executive Order 12916 of May 13, 1994, is amended as follows:

(a) in section 1, by inserting “, as amended by the Protocol of Amendment done at Washington and Mexico City, November 25 and 26, 2002” after “North American Development Bank”;

(b) by striking section 2 and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Sec. 2. (a) The Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall be members of the Board of Directors of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank (“Board”) as provided in clauses (1), (3), and (5) of article II in chapter III of the Agreement.

(b) Appointments to the Board under clauses (7) and (9) of article II in chapter III of the Agreement shall be made by the President. Individuals so appointed shall serve at the pleasure of the President.

(c) The Secretary of the Treasury is selected to be the Chairperson of the Board during any period in which the United States is to select the Chairperson under article III in chapter III of the Agreement.

(d) Except with respect to functions assigned by section 4, 5, 6, or 7 of

this order, the Secretary of the Treasury shall coordinate with the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, such other agencies and officers as may be appropriate, and the individuals appointed under subsection 2(b) as may be appropriate, the development of the policies and positions of the United States with respect to matters coming before the Board.”;

- (c) in section 3, by striking subsections (a), (b), and (c), striking “(d)”, and striking “representatives” and inserting in lieu thereof “members of the Board listed in subsections 2(a) and (b)”;
- (d) in section 6, by striking “Advisory Committee” and inserting in lieu thereof “Community Adjustment and Investment Program Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee”) established pursuant to section 543(b) of the NAFTA Implementation Act”; and
- (e) in section 7(c), by striking “Members” and inserting in lieu thereof “members”.

Sec. 2. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 17, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 20, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 21.

Statement on the Birthday of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

June 17, 2005

I send my best wishes to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for her 60th birthday, June 19. Her strength, courage, and personal sacrifice in standing up for the oppressed people of Burma have inspired those who stand for freedom. Only a return to democracy and reintegration with the international community can bring the freedom and prosperity that the people of Burma deserve. The United States looks forward to the time when Burma is democratic and free.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President’s public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

June 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he greeted President Festus Mogae of Botswana, President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana, President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique, President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia, and President Mamadou Tandja of Niger. They then met in the Cabinet Room.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Jalal Talabani of the Iraqi Transitional Government to discuss progress on drafting the Iraq constitution, the security situation in Iraq, and other issues.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Kang Chol-Hwan of

North Korea, author of “The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag”. He then participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the 2004 Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the U.S. National Day at the World Exposition 2005 in Aichi, Japan, on June 20: Margaret Spellings (head of delegation); Thomas Schieffer; Lisa Guillermin Gable; Tommy Lasorda; and Gary Nakamoto.

June 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Bryn Mawr, PA, where he attended a reception at a private residence.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to University Park, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Mickey Peters. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

June 15

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of Russia to discuss United Nations reform. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Residence, the President met with Members of the Senate to discuss the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

June 16

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He then met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, in the Residence, he met with Republican Members of the House of Representatives to discuss the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari of the Iraqi Transitional Government to the White House on June 24.

The President announced his intention to nominate John G. Grimes to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense (Networks and Information Integration).

The President announced his intention to nominate Wan J. Kim to be an Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights, at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to designate William Baxter as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The President announced his intention to designate David A. Sampson as a Director (Government Representative) of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint James L. Brulte as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Naval Academy.

June 17

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Maple Grove, MN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteers John and Agnes Jurek.

Later in the morning, at the Maple Grove Community Center, the President met with volunteers participating in a training session on Medicare enrollment.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted June 14

Margaret Mary Sweeney, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, vice Robert H. Hodges, Jr., retired.

Thomas Craig Wheeler,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court
of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years,
vice Diane Gilbert Sypolt, retired.

Submitted June 16

John G. Grimes,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of
Defense, vice John P. Stenbit.

Wan J. Kim,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney
General, vice Rene Acosta, resigned.

Withdrawn June 16

Thomas V. Skinner,
of Illinois, to be an Assistant Administrator
of the Environmental Protection Agency,
vice John Peter Suarez, resigned, which was
sent to the Senate on January 24, 2005.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released June 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan

Released June 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press
Secretary Trent Duffy

Released June 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a teleconference briefing by
HHS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
Services Administrator Mark McClellan on
the Medicare outreach campaign

Fact sheet: The President Calls on Congress
To Pass a National Energy Policy

Released June 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: President
To Welcome Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim
al-Jafari

Fact sheet: The President Promotes New
Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Released June 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan and HHS Centers for
Medicare and Medicaid Services Adminis-
trator Mark McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Progress
in Achieving the President's Nonproliferation
Proposals

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing
that the President signed H.R. 1760

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved June 17

H.R. 1760 / Public Law 109-15
To designate the facility of the United States
Postal Service located at 215 Martin Luther
King, Jr. Boulevard in Madison, Wisconsin,
as the "Robert M. La Follette, Sr. Post Office
Building"